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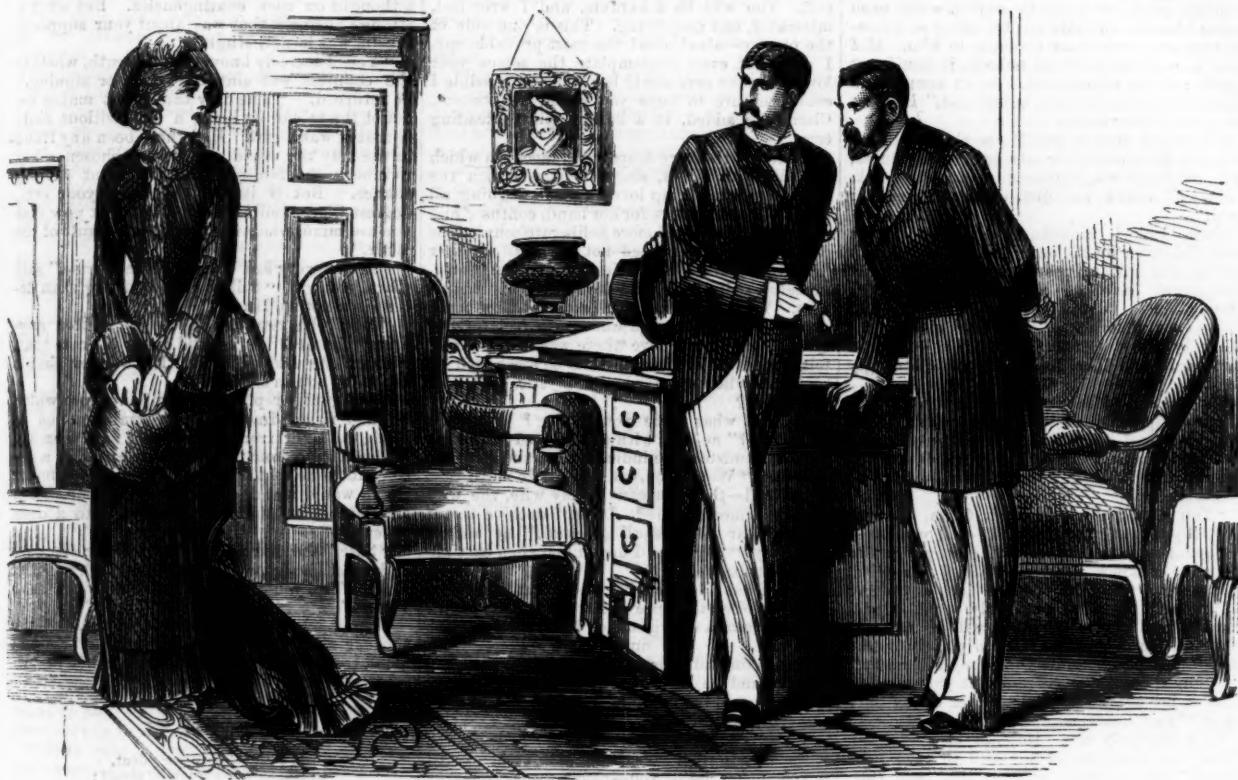
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A FAIR CLIENT.]

TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &c., &c.

CHAPTER V.

I bless thee for the best rich boos
W on from affection tried—
The right to go to death with thee,
To perish by thy side.

MAY sunshine was streaming into a richly-furnished room in a spacious mansion overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, on the wild but picturesque coast of Cornwall. The soft-bracing breeze wafted from the American continent, without break or hindrance, came through the open window, laden with the perfume of tanacetum and myrtle and hawthorn, to say nothing of the more cultivated garden flowers that surrounded the house.

They played on the pale brow and feeble form of a wan and wasted invalid who lay on a large sofa, all supported by soft pillows and covered by an eider down quilt. He was a man of some twenty-five or eight years of age. His features were well—even finely cut; but they were sharp and haggard, with a look of suffering that could not be mistaken as an expression of physical and moral pain.

Alone with his own thoughts, free to indulge

the sad hopelessness of his state, without disguise or restraint, Hugh Lorraine gave way to a fit of despairing contemplation of the past and the future, such as is rarely the lot of a man who, like himself, was the heir to a long-descended title, noble estates, and an unspotted name.

For long years Hugh had known that if his life was spared he should, in all human and rational probability, inherit these honours and riches. There was an all but impossibility that his cousin should have an heir; even now that the death of the countess made another marriage within the range of the chances and changes of life the reports he received of Lord Deloraine's utter desolation and grief scarcely pointed to that conclusion.

It was not that fear which weighed on the spirits and sickened the heart of Hugh Lorraine. It was the misery which each year did but intensify the feeling that he was but a puppet, a mockery of his position, a hopeless cripple, to whom the honours of his uncle brought no prestige, for whom its wealth possessed no charm, or could procure him any pleasure, save of exemption from toil.

Who would ever dream of loving a cripple? Who would trouble themselves about one who, in truth, was only a lifeholder of the rank and wealth he possessed? While to his next heir he was but an obstacle in the way—a block to prevent his succeeding to his rights.

The very physical strength he possessed; the chance of prolonged life, even in his mental and bodily suffering, was rather to be considered as a certainty. He would be hated as well as despised, and his death prayed for as a source of

happiness and ease to others besides his next heir.

Such were the sad, bitter thoughts that galled the spirit of the presumptive heir of the Lorraine, and from which he was only roused by the voice of one who had entered almost unperceived. It was a still, silvery voice, and yet one that had little sweetness in its intonation. It was like the flat response of a silver salver to a strike, rather than the ringing bell-like tones of one who was true and enthusiastic in feeling as in word.

"Hugh, what is it makes you so sad and hopeless?" said the owner of that same voice—a woman of perhaps nearly thirty years of age, but still without one charm undimmed by Time, from the brilliancy of early youth.

In truth, Clara Vere, the cousin on the maternal side of Hugh Lorraine, was a handsome brunette of the Italian type, which can so long and so effectually defy the influence of those swiftly-passing years which are supposed to dim the first radiance of more delicate loveliness. Aubrey turned on his pillow at her greeting.

"I did not complain, Clara. I am not even sure I spoke," he said, coldly.

"Pardon me, you did more than speak, dear Hugh," she said, softly; "you gave such a sigh as spoke far more sadly and touchingly than words. You must have been suffering from severe mental or bodily pain to bring such a groan to your lips, dear cousin. Will you not confide in me? Will you not tell me what new grief has come on you?" she added, softly.

"None, Clara," was the quiet response.

"None?"

"None—at least, no fresh sorrow, and certainly more than you or anyone can relieve."

"You know not that, Hugh," she returned. "You cannot estimate the force of woman's sympathy and affection," she said, half averting her face.

"No woman, or man either, can make me aught but a nuisance to myself and others," he returned, bitterly. "When the earl dies I shall occupy a place that ought to be filled by someone more fitted for its duties, while even Julius himself will hate me for being so inconvenient and useless an obstacle to him. If I were a mere peasant, or nobody, it would not signify; but a crippled earl is an anomaly, a monster who ought not to be endured," he went on, with a bitter smile.

"Would it console you if you thought there was one to whom your life brings happiness, and your death would grieve to the very quick, Aubrey?" asked the girl, still averted her head.

Hugh looked inquiringly at her. If the truth did dawn on his brain it certainly did not produce the instantaneous gladness and relief that might have been anticipated under the circumstances. Clara Vere was handsome, and young enough to flatter a far less ineligible a suitor by the assurance of her love—such as her words and her look and tone strongly implied.

Nor was she without other attainments. She was accomplished and amusing when it so suited her, and had a sufficient fortune to protect her from the charge of seeking honour and independence as the price of the sacrifice at which she hinted.

"You are kind—most kind, Clara. I need not tell you that you have been—that you are—the great solace of my life; the only light to cheer the darkness of my existence," he replied, at length. "But then it is but a passing brightness," he went on, sadly. "You will leave us, and then my mother will be my sole companion, and she does but too plainly betray how deep is her mortification at my deformity."

"Why should I leave you? Is your mother tired of her charge—one left to her by her only sister?" said Clara, deprecatingly.

"No, certainly not. How could she, when she has no daughter of her own to take your place? But you will marry, Clara, and then you—"

"I shall not marry, not leave you, Hugh," she whispered.

"Why not?"

"Because I could not," she returned, softly; and though he could not see her face, he could tell that a crimson flush warmed the recently colourless cheeks, and that her fingers quivered over the book she held, a volume that she was reading aloud to him in his hours of ease.

A strange feeling of mingled pleasure and pain crept over him. She was surely attractive enough—far more so than he could, in his wildest dreams, have supposed to be within his reach. Yet the dawning comprehension of her meaning scarcely warmed his sick heart or excited him to an eager demand for a clearer confession. Yet it was soothing, flattering to believe it possible that he, the cripple, the repulsive one, could be loved or tolerated, and it was not in man's nature to repel the advances of such confused, shrinking, yet brave sacrifice and devotion.

"Clara, this is indeed carrying your woman's generous devotion too far," he said. "I could not expect or wish you to sacrifice all that is dearest to woman for my sake. You ought to be a happy wife, dear Clara, not the companion of a poor cripple like me."

"Suppose it was the greatest happiness I could wish, what then?" she answered.

"Clara, Clara, do not deceive me," he said, hastily, his brain flattered and turned, as it were, by the idea of that implied attachment. "You perhaps scarcely realise what your words convey. If you would rather remain as my companion, my nurse, than as some happy man's wife, you must give me your hand as well as your kind, noble heart. You must be my wife

if you will not leave me to be another man's Clara."

She did not speak, at least, there was no negative, if there was no spoken assent, and his excitement heightened.

"You know not what you are daring, dear, generous girl," he went on. "You will be the object of pity, perhaps of ridicule, as the wife of a crippled husband. You will become weary of me, of the bondage you are taking on yourself. You will be miserable, and I wretched, miserable, and despairing. This is one side of the picture—alas! alas! the most probable one. I dare not even contemplate the solace your love and your care would be; where it possible I could venture to hope you would be content, Clara," he added, in a half gasping, pleading tone.

In truth the very despairing mood in which she had found him, and the balm which the very idea in inspiring love and outweighing all hopes of other suitors for her hand, confused and stifled the calmer and more deliberate convictions of his mind. He paused not to think whether he loved Clara Vere. He saw her handsome, graceful, still young, and devoted to his happiness. What could he desire more? How could he doubt that he should and must feel for her all the passionate love there was, as he dimly felt, concealed in his nature, to be awakened by someone who possessed the mystic power of sympathy?

"Clara, what were you saying? What do you mean?" he said, with an agitated mien that was an unmistakable indication of the struggle within. "Would you, can you really mean that you would—that you can be my wife, the wife of a deformed cripple? Do not deceive me, I cannot bear it. I shall go mad," he added, earnestly, "if you lead me on and then cast me back upon myself."

There was a look on her face that might be interpreted as the pure and true love of woman, or the triumph of a gratified and long indulged ambition. To the unfortunate sufferer from Nature's unkind ones it bore the aspect of the strange and wayward, but still true and honest love that could alone influence a woman in such a sacrifice.

"Yes, Hugh, I will—I can. I do mean what I have told you—what you wish. I will never, never leave you—never marry another man while you need my attendance and my solace. I will—"

She stopped, and he supplied the blank.

"Will be my wife. Is that it? Say it in plain and true and simple words, Clara. Mine is an exceptional case. I need plainer speaking from you than most men would ask from women. Speak more plainly, my cousin. Tell me if it is true that your love for me is strong enough to bear all the trials that await you—that I shall not find you a broken reed in the hour of need, Clara. Tell me this if it is true, if not I will for ever hold my peace, and forget the brief delusion that had deceived me for the moment."

Clara placed her hand calmly and deliberately in his, and her eyes did not quiver or blanch as they met his.

"Yes, Hugh," she said, "I will do all you wish. I will—I do love you so as to devote myself to you for the remainder of your life and mine. No time will shake this resolve, nor induce me to abandon this purpose—the sole object of my life," she added, calmly.

"Clara, kiss me," he said. "Kiss me;" and his eyes met hers with a keen questioning as he spoke.

She bent down over him. She did not shrink, she did not lower her eyes beneath his, as she obeyed the behest, and pressed her lips to his in gentle and maidenly, but not hurried repugnance to the ordeal. Hugh appraised content.

"It shall be so then, Clara, dear, noble Clara, it shall be so. I shall enter on a new life; I shall devote all that I have to you and your happiness, though I can in myself only be a burden and a drag upon you. It shall not be long, dearest, before the plan is carried out. Thank Heaven! I have enough now to make your life all that you can demand, and it cannot

be long before I can place a coronet on that noble brow, which it will better grace than my tired and pain worn lineaments."

A gleam of light flashed across her mobile features for the moment; but it soon died away in a calm, careless smile as she returned:

"Silly Hugh! As if that were probable. As if it were not much more likely that your cousin may soon marry again and have children. It were indeed foolish to ever bestow a thought on such contingencies. But what a strange business that was about your supposed cousin, was it not, Hugh?"

"Yes, I scarcely know the real truth, whether the countess was sinned against or sinning," he returned. "The only thing that makes me doubt the tale of its being a supposititious child is that it was a girl. Had there been any fraud in the lady she would surely have chosen a boy to inherit the family honours and cut out my chance. But it is no subject for your ears, dearest Clara, and I will rest content now that you are mine, whatever may be the result of the affair."

"It was very sad for her in any case," said Clara, softly. "Still, better anything than deceit, is it not so, Hugh?"

"Yes," he returned, fiercely. "better anything than deceit. I could never tolerate that, even in one I loved best. No wonder that it broke my cousin's heart."

Clara gently replaced the pillows from which he had risen, drawing the curtains so as to shade the light from the invalid, and then she began to read from the volume she held in a low constant tone that soon sent him to the slumber which would recruit his exhausted frame. Then she laid down the book and fell into a deep reverie.

"Safe," she murmured. Yes, safe for a coronet and wealth and power. I know enough for that. Clara Vere, you deserve success and you have won it."

It was a bold presumption, perhaps, and the speaker scarcely knew that her lips breathed aloud the thoughts that floated over her brain.

CHAPTER VI.

Winds with voices never silent,
Ocean, with thy troubled breast;
Ever moaning, ever sobbing,
Tell me, do ye long for rest?
I am weary, very weary,
And I often long for rest.

"Miss LORAINA, dear, I have a commission for you that I cannot entrust to any other hands or head," said Madame de Cenci to the young companion, who had already become to her almost as a daughter, even in the short space of time that had elapsed since the girl had assumed her duties in the household of the invalid.

"I shall only be too proud to justify your confidence, madame," returned Leila, in her calm, soft tones. "What am I to do?"

"I want you to take these papers to Mr. Vansandam, my solicitor, Leila, and explain to him the alterations I have made in the original. I am scarcely well enough to see him, and then I cannot make him understand without such an exertion to speak your harsh language," she added with a gentle shake of the head, "so it will be best to be interpreted by you."

The Countess de Cenci was, indeed, a most complete specimen of an Italian lady of rank at a mature age.

Still graceful and even handsome, retaining the rich satin black hair and the soft almond eyes of her nation in their pristine beauty. The languor of ill-health rather seemed to enhance than to lessen her charms; it so completely accorded with her soft mien, and her somewhat fleshy form. Leila was perhaps enviable in obtaining a situation with so high bred and attractive a woman, and yet, either from her own sorrows, or from the lack of sympathy and rapport between them, she scarcely felt the affection nor the confidence that she reproached herself for not entertaining for her patroness.

However, she crushed back all such ungrate-

ful and useless repinings as could scarcely fail to burn in her wounded, galled heart, and strove earnestly and faithfully to do her very utmost to soothe and assist the invalid countess in all the real or fancied wants and difficulties of her present life.

The carriage was ordered to convey Leila to the Temple, the residence of Mr. Vansandam, for Madame de Cenci was extremely observant of all the minor etiquettes which surround the young and lovely, like a panoply of armour, and as yet Leila had never been more exposed than in her former position as daughter of the Lorraine.

Very lovely and refined she looked as she entered the carriage, which was to her as an accustomed right and habit. Her black dress, which she still wore for her whom she had so long considered as a mother, was more becoming than the gayest toilette to her beautiful and touchingly pensive face, and gave even a more than ordinary girlish youthfulness to the graceful figure.

No wonder that when she ascended the stairs to the clerks' office she was accosted by them with deferential admiration.

"Mr. Vansandam is not within, mademoiselle," the young man said who first advanced to meet her, "but the managing clerk, Mr. Sabine, is in his room. Shall I tell him Mademoiselle de Cenci is here?"

Leila coloured slightly, and the bloom gave a new charm to the complexion that was, perhaps, too delicate since her late trials.

"No, a lady from the Countess de Cenci, if you please," she said, quietly. "Miss Loraine is my name."

The clerk soon returned.

"Walk in, if you please, Miss Loraine," he said, leading the way along a passage and opening a door at the end. "Mr. Sabine is there."

Leila entered the handsomely-furnished room. There were two gentlemen standing between the table and the door, one of them with a hat in his hand preparing to leave the room. He was decidedly distinguished-looking and handsome, but still there was an expression in his eye as he glanced at Leila that brought the girl's blood to her face, and she half-drew back from the doorway in which she was standing.

"Pray take a seat, Miss Loraine, I shall be disengaged in a moment," said the other gentleman, who was evidently Mr. Sabine. "Lord Dunellan has only a word more to say to me."

"Which need not detain you from your fair client, Sabine," said the young nobleman, with a slight bow to Leila. "You will meet me at the club at half-past seven; we can finish our business there." And without waiting for any reply, he left the room, closing the door after him.

"Now, Miss Loraine, I am at your orders," said the young lawyer, turning to his accosted seat at the table.

And for the first time Leila fairly caught a real glance at the man with whom her business was to be transacted. Geoffrey Sabine was not handsome. Some persons might actually have called him plain Geoffrey. But there was that in his face that redeemed it from any such charge. His splendid large dark grey eyes that could melt or flash at pleasure; his noble, though not lofty brow; the wondrously sweet smile that at times parted lips somewhat too stern and resolute, gave an attraction to his face that the handsome features of Lord Dunellan lacked.

Then his figure was tall and lithe, though neither his dress nor bearing were, perhaps, quite as aristocratic as his companion's. At least, such was the opinion formed of Geoffrey Sabine by the shy examination of the young Leila.

"Shy," yet keen and searching, for she knew that much depended on that man's character in the negotiation entrusted to her care. If Mr. Vansandam was away, and all committed to his representative, what an all important personage that substitute became. And it was that which caused Leila's sharp scrutiny of the "managing clerk."

Perhaps the result might bring somewhat different results. But as yet Geoffrey Sabine

and Leila Loraine sat surveying each other as calmly as if double their years had passed over their heads. Mr. Sabine was the first to speak.

"You are here on Madame de Cenci's business, no doubt, mademoiselle."

Leila bowed assent.

"You will pardon my saying that she is somewhat fidgety about its progress. It is impossible to hurry these matters," he returned, slowly.

"Madame de Cenci is an invalid and a foreigner anxious to return to her country. It is some excuse for impatience," pleaded Leila, softly.

"There is no doubt of it, and what is more, an excuse from your lips, mademoiselle, must carry weight," was the reply. "I did not mean it as a compliment," he went on, seeing the colour mount in her cheeks, "but as my impression. You do not speak as if it were only a superficial subterfuge."

Now the colour deepened on more.

"Is it your profession that gives you such hard ideas?" she asked, reproachfully.

"Perhaps; but it makes us value truth and honour more when we find them, and I do believe they are in you, mademoiselle. We see so many that it gives us insight into character."

"And now will you look in those papers. I believe I can give you all the information you may want," she replied, as if to stop and change the subject. "If you do not understand them, Madame de Cenci told me what I was to explain in English, what she conveyed me in her own tongue, so it is more likely to be correct," she went on, with a pretty grave business air distinct from coquetry or design.

Geoffrey Sabine saw and understood it. And what was more, he acted on it as a gentleman and man of honour should. He applied himself at once to the consideration of the papers, and if his eyes did at intervals glance furtively at the lovely messenger of the countess, it was scarcely more than might be expected from human nature at twenty-four.

"I presume you are aware of the nature of these papers, mademoiselle?" he asked, after he had finished them.

"It has something to do with Madame de Cenci's will, I believe, and she told me some small details she wished to be fully carried out," returned Leila, quietly.

"True, but I suspect that neither the countess nor you can quite understand the difficulties of the case," resumed Geoffrey. "You must comprehend, mademoiselle, that Madame de Cenci wishes to provide for a relative of whose existence she is not quite certain, and at the same time to avoid any injury being done to her legal heir; and this is the difficulty of the matter."

Leila waited for further explanation.

"I know she fancies there is a child of her brother's living somewhere, and that she wants him to inherit all she can leave him if he should be discovered," returned the girl, gravely.

"Yet in my opinion it is a simple romantic absurdity," resumed Geoffrey. "After all these years a wife and child would certainly have turned up if any such had existed. And if the countess ties up her wealth till she is found, I fear the rightful heirs will be in their graves without enjoyment of their legal inheritance."

Again there was a pause.

"But it would certainly be more dreadful if the near relative, the child of her only brother, were to be found in poverty and distress, he should not have any help from this wealth," pleaded Leila; "and I do believe she must be right."

"It is a natural sequence for you to believe at your age and sex," he said, with a smile; "but pardon me, that does not establish it."

"But," she rejoined, eagerly, "it may be that Madame de Cenci has not been able to make us see clearly what she means. It is so different in her imperfect English."

"Will you give me a sketch? I will tell you then how far I did see it properly," he replied, with a slight incredulity in his tone.

"It was just this as my patroness has related it to me. Some years since, I do not exactly know

how many, Madame de Cenci's brother, the Marchese Spinola, came over to England on some errand, either of pleasure or business, I scarcely understand which, and after some prolonged absence he wrote a brief note to his sister to say that he was about to be married, though the affair was to be kept a profound secret from his other relatives.

"You have always been my confidant—my second self, Beatrice," he wrote, "and I am certain you will enter into my feelings and keep my secret. My future bride is portionless—aye, and not of ordinarily noble birth, though she has well born and even titled relatives. I dare not announce it to anyone even here, as Bertha is bound hand and foot to a rigid old relative who would be perfectly outrageous at any but a public marriage, which would not suit me, so it will be sub rosa you see, dear Beatrice, and in due time I shall bring my lovely bride to plead her own cause with our formal relatives."

"Madame de Cenci says she was equally vexed and alarmed at this letter," pronounced Leila, earnestly, "because the marchese had been betrothed from boyhood to an Italian girl. She kept the secret, and so far as I can make out, she never answered the letter—at least she does not say that she did—only that she doubts the letter ever got to its destination; and in a few months more she had a brief, broken-hearted note from her new sister-in-law to say that he was dead, which a short time proved to be but too true. The death was announced from other sources, of course."

"And his marriage, and the birth of the child?" asked Geoffrey, quickly.

"The note was signed 'Bertha di Spinola,' and a little time after Madame de Cenci had as brief a word from an unknown hand that a son was born," said Leila, flushing. "What more could be expected?"

"And the comtesse still took no notice?"

"None; she feared to compromise herself, and thought it would be of no use," returned Leila, a slight expression of bitter sarcasm crossing her lips, that was not unnoticed, and, perhaps, not lost on the young man's perception. "Now she thinks differently; she has no children and would be so thankful to discover and adopt this nephew. Oh! Mr. Sabine, it must be very dreadful for her to think of him—poor and unfriended—and for her money to be alienated from him if he were to be found."

"If he was to turn up he would surely be entitled to the family honours and estates, and she need not trouble herself," said Geoffrey, sarcastically.

"No—no; you are mistaken," said Leila, gravely. "Madame de Cenci says it would be most difficult to prove his rights—now they have gone to a stranger; and, besides, it is a poor family and her money would restore it to distinction. 'Oh, Mr. Sabine, do try to arrange for this possible contingency,'" she added, clasping her hands in enthusiastic pleading.

Geoffrey smiled half cynically. Had it been one older and less innocent than the fair creature before him he might have dreamed of some ulterior motive in this vivid interest; but it was as possible to suspect an angel as that lovely child-girl.

"May I ask what relation you hold to Madame de Cenci, mademoiselle?" he said, at last.

"Only that of her companion," was the frank reply. "I am no relative in the most distant degree."

Geoffrey was doubly interested now. Evidently the comtesse was enlisting the good offices of the young girl as a rightful duty, and she was fulfilling it.

"And these papers are not satisfactory? What does the comtesse want altered?" he asked, again.

Leila was compelled now to draw her chair nearer to the table, and sit in close contact to the young managing clerk. Their fingers indeed met accidentally more than once during the explanation of the papers and the errors Madame de Cenci wished corrected, but neither appeared to feel embarrassed.

Geoffrey quickly drew back, as if he had touched a wrinkled, bony hand, instead of the soft, white palm. And Leila was too intent on the accurate fulfilment of her commission to be alive to minor adjuncts of the duty. At last Geoffrey drew his chair slightly back, and threw himself on its wide arms for consideration.

"I think I can see the drift of the comtesse," he said, at last. "It is most difficult, since she neither knew the place, nor date of birth, nor the name of this child. But, I think, it can be managed in this way: Madame de Cenci can leave her property in trust to her relatives for them to enjoy its income, minus a sum to be spent yearly in discovering what she wishes to know as to this phantom nephew. And should he turn up it should be clearly arranged that her relatives should not have to refund anything they had received of the monies; so that they would only suffer from the disappointment of their expectations."

"Only," repeated Leila, with a sad smile. "Only. Surely that is terrible enough."

"It is surely impossible that you can have in any but a trifling way at your age," said Geoffrey, gazing earnestly at the young face.

She gave a grave, half bitter smile.

"Yes; of quite enough to make me realise all others," she said, quickly. Then, rising to depart, she said: "Then you will send the papers to Madame de Cenci when they are ready?"

"Yes. And now, I am afraid there will be no further excuse for demanding your presence," he replied, involuntarily, and with a grave simplicity that showed the expression genuine. "However, I shall—I hope—see you again when the new draft is ready for approval. It is so much more easy to understand you than the comtesse. Good morning, mademoiselle. You have made it all clear, and gained your point, you can tell Madame de Cenci," he added, as he opened the door for her to pass. "And all others that she wishes, I should think," was his mental comment. "What an angel, or rather what an ideal woman she is. One would fancy she was a man by her clear comprehensions, and yet she is a perfect child in simplicity and sweetness."

Geoffrey's thoughts certainly wandered from the brief he was drawing up after Leila vanished.

"What disappointment can she have had," he thought. "Of course, love, there can be nothing else. Yet, who could resist or forget such girl. It is monstrous to suppose it. Who can the fellow be, I wonder?"

Once more Geoffrey applied himself to his work, and this time with more success.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

A LARGE ELECTRO-MAGNET.

MR. CHARLES REITZ, of Indianapolis, Ind., has sent a description of a large electro-magnet made by him for Professor Zahm, of the University of Notre Dame. The length of the cores is 30 inches, diameter 4 inches. Heads of rubber, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, 9 inches in diameter. The yoke is $\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick, $\frac{6}{5}$ inches wide, and 18 inches long, with 3 inch slots to admit of moving the cores. The bolts which connect the cores with the yoke are $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.

The cores are wound with eight layers of No. six cotton covered copper wire, the wire being wound double, and the alternate layers being provided with terminals, which are connected with a plug switch on the baseboard, so that the electric current may be sent through the coils in various ways. The magnet is provided with two sets of pole extensions for diamagnetic experiments, one set being conical, the other flat. The armature is 15 inches long, 3 inches thick, and 4 inches wide.

Different effects may be produced in this magnet by connecting the coils with the battery in different ways. The changes that may be made in this way are almost without number. It is estimated that the magnet, with proper battery power, will lift three tons. The weight of the magnet and its attachments is 800 pounds.

A RAINY DAY.

How tired one grows of a rainy day
For a rainy day brings back so much;
Old dreams revive that are buried away,
And the past comes back to the sight
and touch.

When the night is short and the day is long,
And the rain falls down with ceaseless beat,
We tire of our thoughts, as we tire of a song
That over and over is played in the street.

When I woke this morning, and heard the splash,
Of the rain-drops over the tall elms' leaves,
I was carried back, in a lightning's flash,
To the dear old home with the sloping eaves.

And you and I in the garret high,
Were playing again at hide-and-seek;
And bright was the light of your laughing eye,
And rich the glow of your rounded cheek.

And again I was nestled in my white bed,
Under the eaves, and hearing above
The feet of the rain-steeds over my head,
While I dreamed sweet dreams of you, my love.

Love, my lover, with eyes of truth—
Oh, beautiful love of the vanished years.
There is no other love like the love of youth—
I say it over and over with tears.

Wealth, and honour, and fame may come—
They cannot replace what is taken away,
There is no other home like the childhood's home—
No other love like the love of May.

Though the sun is bright in the midday skies,
There cometh an hour when the sad heart grieves.
With a lonely wail, like a lost child's cry,
For the trundle-bed and the sloping eaves.

When, with vague unrest and nameless pain
We hunger and thirst for a voice and touch
That we never on earth shall know again,
Oh! a rainy day brings back so much.

E. W.

A new fashion has appeared. It consists simply of studs, sleeve-buttons and scarf-pin in red and green gold combined with platinum. They also wear scarf-pins in the form of all the famous old swords, Joyeuse, Jarnacs, Toledo, Yatagans, &c. The ladies are wearing brooches formed of their initials in diamonds traversed by an arrow. Brooches have also been made for the year 1880 in which the figures are made in diamonds instead of the initials.

FACETIAE.

WELL HIT.

FARMER (to Mossoo, whose gun has gone off by accident): "Here, ar say, that's ower bad; there's one 'o them shots gone clean through t' crown o' my hat."

Mossoo (who has, up to the present, missed everything): "Ah, zen, zat is bettaire: is it not sat I improve?" —Judy.

THE PROPER ORDER.

GOVERNESS (teaching alphabet): "And what comes after T, Master William?"

M. W.: "Bed."

(It would have done so, too, if Judy had been that governess.) —Judy.

AT GUILDFORD.

LORD B.: "Wantah to know my polishy? all right! my polishy is to come again next year." —Fun.

ONLY HALF A SHOW.

FIRST HIBERNIAN: "Well, Patsy, did ye see the illuminations?"

SECOND DITTO: "Faith, an' I sor one, but it hadn't been loighted." —Judy.

"WAIT FOR AN ANSWER."

CAN an innkeeper be always "a host in himself"?

Can the Roll of Fame be properly described as "filling at the price"?

Can a baker by trade be said to be a "Regular Loafer"?

Can striking attitudes be called harmless pugilism?

Can "three sheets in the wind" be said to be very "strange bedclothes"?

Can spare-rib be really a popular diet among the Mormons?

Can a plain cook be also a pretty one?

Can pearl powder be said to be "the pale of civilisation"? —Judy.

ONE WAY OF PUTTING IT.

MISTRESS: "Has anyone called while we were out, Sarah?"

SARAH (the new servant): "Yes, ma'am, two ladies, but I did not catch their names, and they had not got their tickets with them." —Judy.

RETRIBUTION.

PAPA: "What's the matter, John? Aren't you well?"

JOHN: "I don't feel quite well, sir, please. I think it's the kitchen stairs a-top of the plum pie."

(He had then been at it as usual in the passage.) —Judy.

ANENT THE COMING BYRONISM.

THERE must have been a rare struggle for supremacy between those veteran wags, Messrs. Byron and Toole, on the morning the latter called upon H. J. B., and learned the title of the piece with which it is intended to convulse comedy-loving London about Christmas time.

"Well?" inquired Toole, upon entering the dramatist's apartment.

"The Upper Crust," returned Byron.

"Good ovens!" exclaimed the comedian, whistling a bar of "Obadiah" in pleasurable surprise.

"You like it?"

"Upper Crust? It's (a)crumb-tious!"

"That's right," said Byron. "Loaf me, loaf my title," is my motto.

"And pray what kind of a roll is mine?" queried the comedian, anxiously.

"Oh, the principal, of course. You'll have plenty to dough, never fear. I intend the ready adventurer for you. Are you quite agreeable?"

"Yeast, to be sure," answered Toole, whose strength was ebbing fast. And he took his departure. Game to the last, however, he shortly afterwards returned, and exhibiting an empty meerschaum, begged for "the loan of a little to-baker!"



[A SURPRISE.]

ETHEL ARBUTHNOT; OR, WHO'S HER HUSBAND?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "The Bondage of Brandon,"
"Breaking the Charm," "Ethel Arbuthnot;"
or, "Who's Her Husband?" &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PURSUIT.

DUKE: "Why, what's the matter?"
BRA: "My daughter! Oh, my daughter!"
DUKE: "Dead?"
BRA: "Ay, to me. She is stolen from me."
OTHELLO.

SIR BRANDON ARBUTHNOT was deeply chagrined at the deception which had been practised upon him at Brook Cottage, and he could not conceal his disgust. When he and the lawyer reached the hotel he ordered dinner, and limped by the aid of a crutch to the sofa, upon which he stretched himself.

"You seem irritated, Sir Brandon," remarked Mr. Clews. "I would not allow such a trifling affair as has just taken place to annoy me."

"I can't help it, Clews," replied the baronet. "Never in my life was I made such an idiot of, or so completely taken in."

"Ha! ha!" replied Clews, "it is very laughable when you come to think of it."

"It may be amusing to you, my dear sir, but to me it is just the reverse. The little puss had her revenge on me. Fancy my proposing to that girl. It is the most absurd and ridiculous thing. If it was to get about the clubs I should be ashamed to show my face in Pall Mall."

"No fear of that," answered the lawyer.

"You will not betray me, Mr. Clews?"
"Certainly not. Silent as the grave. I always keep professional secrets."

"It is one comfort that the joke is confined to our two selves. I hate being laughed at. The girl is as proud as Lucifer too. She refused Tom Woodruffe. I can't make her out."

"Nor I," replied Clews. "She must have had an affair of the heart, or she would have married someone before this. She is not even engaged. I am going over to the cottage to-night, and I will see what I can get out of the mother. Do you still feel any inclination to make them an allowance? they want it. If you do, give the old woman a pension; she'll take it fast enough."

"I'm not in a giving vein to-day," answered Sir Brandon. "After being treated in the way I was, I feel much hurt."

"It was only fair tit for tat. An accident delivered you into their hands. You had called them common, vulgar people, and Ethel went in for revenge."

"She had it to her full satisfaction, I'll own that. Confound it! I can't bear to think that I was so thoroughly outwitted by a girl."

When annoyed, Sir Brandon had an unpleasant way of grating his teeth, which he did on the present occasion, so that it could be heard all over the room. This is always a sign of an unpleasant and ungovernable temper, which he certainly possessed in an uncommon degree.

"Will you authorise me to do anything for them," continued Mr. Clews, who was always a friend of the Arbuthnots. "Say three hundred a year for the mother?"

"I would have done it if this had not happened," rejoined the baronet, "but now I will not give them a halfpenny."

"For the mother," pleaded the lawyer.

"She is just as bad as the daughter. They were both in the plot."

"Widow and orphan—that is half orphan. You know, Sir Brandon," urged Mr. Clews, "you are a freemason, and I need not say that

the widow always has a claim on those who belong to the craft."

"Not a farthing," cried Sir Brandon. "She has defied and turned me into ridicule. I am a laughing stock. They stand alone now."

After this declaration Mr. Clews forbore to urge him any further, though he determined to return to the charge at a more favourable and auspicious opportunity, imagining that his rich and ill-tempered client would soften towards his relatives when the sting caused by Ethel's behaviour had worn off, which it undoubtedly would do in the course of time.

After dinner he ordered the carriage and drove from Morecambe to Brook Cottage, intending to have a long chat with the mother and daughter, whom he thought deserved scolding for the way in which they had treated the haughty scion of the house of Arbuthnot. What was his surprise on entering to see Mrs. Simmons much agitated. She put her fingers on her lips and said:

"Hush! the missis is very bad!"

"Indeed!" cried Clews; "what is the matter with her?"

"Oh, sir, something dreadful has happened! Go into the parlour. Mrs. Arbuthnot will tell you all about it. I'm so glad you've come. She's taking on terribly, poor thing."

Unable to make out what had occurred, the lawyer entered the parlour and found Mrs. Arbuthnot stretched on the sofa bathed in tears, and talking wildly to herself. Shaking her hand, he begged her to be calm.

"Pray tell me the cause of your grief," he said, "and I may be able to comfort you."

"My daughter is gone, Mr. Clews!" she replied, checking her sobs.

"Gone! Where?"

"Two men came in a coach this afternoon and said they were lunatic asylum doctors, and carried her off!"

"What an outrage!"

"They had certificates stating she was mad, and all I know is that she went with them and a poor gipsy woman who lives in the mine who-

was knocked down, but has since gone home, said her husband was in the plot, and the men were going to take Ethel over to France."

Mr. Clews was completely staggered at this information.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Arbuthnot," he said, "do please try to collect your senses. Your story is somewhat incoherent, but I think I can understand that Ethel is gone."

"Yes. I shall never—never see my darling child again!"

"She was abducted by two men who called themselves doctors, and declared she was insane."

"That's right, but she is no more mad than you are, sir."

"Granted. We know that. Let me pursue my inquiry. We must act in accordance with the law of evidence. The gipsy woman who lives in the mine told you these men had taken her to France."

"That was what she said."

"Very well. Now we have a concise statement. Will you be candid with me?"

"Yes, sir," replied poor Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"Tell me, then, if there is any man who has an interest in carrying off Ethel? Don't prevaricate or keep anything from me. If you deal fairly with me, I may be able to recover your daughter for you."

"I don't know if I ought to tell you. It is her secret, and she might not like it."

"It is the only chance of saving the dear girl."

Mrs. Arbuthnot reflected a moment. Clews had invariably been their friend, and she felt that the time had come when he ought to know all. Sitting up on the sofa, she wiped her red and swollen eyes, and related the whole history of Ethel's connection with Herbert Gordon.

"Hum!" said Mr. Clews, when she had finished. "This is very grave. I am acquainted with the Gordon family, having had several transactions with the late Henry Carter Gordon in connection with the conveyance of some property. Herbert, who went under the false name of Layton, was always a scamp, but he is a most determined man. He will stick at nothing to accomplish his purpose. If he loves your daughter, as we have every reason to believe he does, you may depend upon it, ma'am, that it is he who has had her abducted."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it," said Mr. Clews, decisively.

Mrs. Arbuthnot dried her eyes.

"If that is the case I don't care," she replied. "Ethel was legally married to him, and he is her husband, in spite of her being married again to Charles Palethorpe."

"It is very sad," remarked the lawyer. "I always thought that Ethel's life was blighted through some secret grief. Mr. Gordon, as I have said, is a determined man; but it appears to me that he loves your daughter."

"She once loved him," replied Mrs. Arbuthnot. "It was the discovery of the murder of Mr. Palethorpe that turned her against him."

"He married her," said Mr. Clews, "and she is his wife. The marriage with the younger Palethorpe goes for nothing. It seems to me that she might forgive him. In the first place, he killed the father to get money for her. Secondly, he threw Charles down the mine because he thought that he intended to take his darling away from him. When men are in love with a woman, Mrs. Arbuthnot, they will do strange things."

"That is so," answered the widow. "But Ethel is a very religious girl, and though I believe she still loves Herbert Gordon, she will never forgive him."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure."

"I will make a search for Ethel at once, and I think I shall not be rash in promising you that I will bring her back within a week. It is a pity that she cannot be happy with Mr. Gordon. No one need know what he has done. It was all for her, and though we cannot reprobate his conduct too highly, love palliates a good deal."

"She will never forgive him."

"Perhaps he will commit some awful crime," said Mr. Clews. "He is just the desperate kind of man who would kill her and himself. We cannot tell what will happen. I will hasten to town, obtain the services of a detective, and start upon the chase directly. Ethel must be saved."

"Oh, Mr. Clews!" cried Mrs. Arbuthnot; "I do not know what the future has in store for us, and I care little, so long as I have my child. She is all that is left to comfort me in my old age. Bring me back my child, and I shall never be able to thank you sufficiently."

"I understand, madame," replied the lawyer. "You shall have a telegram every day reporting progress."

Mrs. Arbuthnot thanked him; and bidding her be of good cheer, he got into the carriage and was driven back to Morecambe. When he told Sir Brandon Arbuthnot that Ethel had been abducted, the surprise of the latter was intense; but he took care not to inform him of the relations existing between her and Mr. Gordon.

This was thoughtful of him, because he would only have associated her name with a great scandal, of which the baronet would only have been too glad to lay hold to her disadvantage.

"Something must be done," exclaimed Sir Brandon. "I must put my resentment on one side. The girl is in danger. Seek her, Clews, and spare no expense."

"I do not intend to do so," replied the lawyer.

"Spend money like water, and send the bill into me."

"Pardon me, Sir Brandon," said Mr. Clews; "this is my affair. I will do all in my power to find Miss Ethel Arbuthnot, and whatever it costs will be my loss. Other people in this country, besides the hereditary aristocracy, happen to have money."

The baronet looked astonished.

"Are you too turning against me?" he asked.

"Not at all. I should be sorry to lose a rich client; but it seems to me that you arrogate too much to yourself because you have been born to a title and some wealth."

"If I hadn't a bad foot, Clews, I would kick you for saying that," cried the baronet.

"If you did it would be the worst thing you ever did in your life, sir," answered the lawyer. "I should have my remedy by an action for assault and battery."

"And I should have the satisfaction of kicking a lawyer."

"The lawyer begs to inform you, Sir Brandon Arbuthnot," said Mr. Clews, "that he thinks himself as good as you, and begs to wish you good evening."

Sir Brandon looked stupefied. He was so used to people deferring to his wishes that he could not believe a lawyer whom he employed would leave him in that way.

"But, Clews, my good fellow," he exclaimed, "I—"

"Mr. Clews, if you please," replied the lawyer.

"You will lose my business. I—I don't understand this."

"I can afford to do so, Sir Brandon. Good-day."

With a low bow the lawyer quitted the room, and took the next train up to London, disgusted with the empty-headed pride of the baronet, and anxious to shew him that a hard-working man of the people could be as good and generous as a heaven-born member of the aristocracy.

He engaged a detective at once to find out where Ethel had been taken. It was not a difficult task, for the directors traced her from Brook Cottage to the station, and from there to Dieppe. When he had made himself sure of his facts, he informed Mr. Clews, and they started together for France. Just before he left his office he received a telegram from the hotel at Morecambe which contained startling news.

"SIR BRANDON ARBUTHNOT has had an apoplectic stroke. He lies in a very dangerous condition. Doctor despairs of his life. If you are his friend and legal adviser come down at once."

"Humph!" said the little lawyer. "Providence moves in a mysterious way. I should like to make his will; but Ethel must be attended to first. The people before the heaven-born aristocracy. Kick me, will he? Ha! ha! I'm only a Bedford Row lawyer, but I'm as good as a baronet in my own estimation, and my heart is in the right place, I hope. Ethel first—baronet afterwards."

With this reflection he started for Dieppe to search for Ethel, and lend her all the assistance in his power.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Act. 2. "Most monstrous! Knowest thou this paper?"

Gen. "Ask me not what I know." SHAKESPEARE.

When Tom Woodruffe was felled to the ground by Ezra, Edward Charrington did not hesitate in the course he felt he ought to adopt.

"Help me carry the girl," he exclaimed. "The coach is useless. I can see the lights of the château ahead."

Ezra at once complied with the request, and between them they carried the inanimate girl up the road, leaving the coachmen swearing at one another, and endeavouring to pacify their horses. No attempt was made to stop them, and in a quarter of an hour they arrived at the lonely country house which called Herbert Gordon master.

He had received a telegraphic despatch from Charrington, sent from England, and was expecting their coming. When the bell rang, he opened the door himself.

"What does this mean?" he asked. "If you have used any violence, by heaven you shall answer for it."

"Don't be afraid," replied Charrington. "The girl has only fainted. Our carriage ran into another. We had to carry her."

Herbert took Ethel tenderly from their hands, and conveyed her into the house, placing her on a sofa. The two satellites followed him, and he dismissed them very briefly.

"There is your money, Mr. Charrington," he said. "I thank you for the able way in which you have conducted this affair, and shall rely on your secrecy."

Charrington took the roll of notes.

"I shall not betray you," he replied, "for my own sake, and I can answer for my man. We are both as much implicated as you are. Good night."

He and Ezra took their departure, and walked back along the road to Dieppe, leaving Herbert Gordon alone with Ethel, who continued unconscious. Herbert sank on his knees before her and kissed her lily-white hand.

"My own—my darling one!" he murmured. "Dream of my life, I love thee. It was for you that I sinned. It is for you that I would bear a thousand deaths."

Ethel opened her eyes and looked vacantly around her.

"Mother!" she exclaimed.

"Your mother is not here, Ethel," replied Herbert Gordon. "Look at me."

"Who are you?" she asked.

"Your husband!"

"Oh, Heaven! Is it you, Herbert?" Ethel said. "Was it by your orders that I was taken from my home?"

"Yes, dearest," he replied, "for dearest you will always be to me. I could not live without you. When we last met you repudiated and drove me from your side. I felt that I must have you alone with me. Forgive me for the means I took to secure you."

"But this is an unpardonable outrage," said Ethel, sitting up and looking him straight in the face.

"Think of my love for you, Ethel," answered Herbert Gordon, drawing his breath quickly. "You loved me once."

"I know it; but that awful night on the pier at St. Ambrose, and then again the fate of Charles. You brought about the death of father and son."

He bowed his head sadly.

"I did," he rejoined. "But listen to me: I fell madly in love with you. I was at the time under a cloud. My brother would have nothing to do with me, and he only made me a small allowance on the understanding that I took a false name and never came near him. You married me; I was absolutely penniless. The elder Palethorpe would not lend me money, and in a moment of desperation I robbed and threw him into the sea."

"It was cruel."

"Yet it was for you, darling."

"And poor Charles Palethorpe, how sad his end was."

"We struggled together," said Herbert. "I was the stronger, and I cast him into the mine, as I threw his father into the sea. It was all for you, Ethel, and if the time was to come over again, I would do the same thing."

Ethel was surprised at the fiery energy with which he spoke. She could not doubt that the man loved her fondly, madly, devotedly!

"Think of the position I hold now," he continued, "with my name and my fortune, and I may say my figure, for though I am not vain, I know I am a good-looking young fellow. I could marry almost any girl I wished, but it is you I want. Oh, Ethel, I would sacrifice my salvation for you!"

"Hash! You must not talk like that," she replied. "Surely you have done enough to anger Heaven."

"I have indeed."

There was a slight pause.

"What is your object in bringing me here?" she asked.

"I mean you no harm, Ethel," he answered. "You shall be at liberty to depart in three days if you tell me frankly, candidly and finally, that you cannot live with me. But—"

He paused abruptly.

"But what?" she asked.

"Ere you leave this house you shall see me die at your feet. I will give you time to think the matter out."

"Three days?" she said.

"Yes. I am no vulgar boaster. You know what I have done, and what I am capable of. I do not value life one jot or one iota, unless you share it with me, and I am not asking you to live a life of poverty and privation. I am very rich and all the luxuries of the world shall be yours, added to the undying love which I will bestow upon you."

"If I refuse?"

"Then you shall go your way. Bad as I am I am a gentleman, and will do you no violence. I value life very little without you, and I will die at your feet. When I am dead, if you care to shed a tear you can do so, and say, 'at all events he loved me, and he proved it!'"

There was such an air of determination about him that Ethel could not doubt for a moment that he was really in earnest. Her mind was relieved when she saw that he meant to inflict no harm upon her, and that her honour was safe in his hands, though he had adopted such extraordinary means to get her to the lonely chateau.

"You are my wife, Ethel," he went on, in tremulous tones. "You vowed to love me at the altar. Cannot you forgive me for what I have done? I am very sorry for it. All my future life shall be devoted to penitence. The scriptures promise forgiveness to a person who is penitent. Will you set yourself above Heaven?"

"It is not for me to do that," she replied.

"I know that you could not have really loved Charles Palethorpe. It was a momentary infatuation, though you encouraged him to kill me."

"I thought I loved him at the time."

"Now, let me argue the point with you."

Herbert Gordon said. "You were angry and disgusted with me. This young man, whose death I deeply regret—it would not have occurred if he had not tried to gain your love and crossed my path—was going to kill me, and actually did kill my brother."

"Well."

"You were willing to marry him after that. Why, then, can you object to me? He was as bad as I was."

This reasoning was unanswerable.

"Herbert," she said, "give me time to think all this over. My head is in a whirl. I have gone through so much since I knew you first that I am not so strong as I was once."

"Say that you love me."

"I—I do not dislike you; but you are such a dreadful man."

"It is all through my love for you, sweet one. I could kill the whole world if the world came between us. Ethel, will you redeem me by giving me back the affection I once gained, and which I have forfeited?"

"I cannot say. Let me have time to consider," she answered.

"Remember, I am in earnest. This is a matter of life and death with me. If you reject me I will never trouble you again."

He pointed to a pistol which laid on the table.

"That will end it," he added. "And, my own sweet love, I will die with your name on my lips. Good-night. I will send a woman to conduct you to your chamber, and you will not see me again for three days unless you send for me. I shall go to Dieppe to-morrow morning, and stay there until it is time to receive your answer."

Ethel's eyes lighted up as if she contemplated an attempt to escape.

"You cannot get away, for you will be closely watched," he said. "For three days you are my prisoner!"

He held out his hand, and Ethel took it, pressing it slightly.

"Darling, once more good-night!" he exclaimed.

Casting a glance of lingering tenderness and undying love upon her, he quitted the room.

"How he must love me!" sighed Ethel.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"ONE ALWAYS RETURNS TO ONE'S FIRST LOVE."

"Will, a monstrous watch is at the door."

HENRY IV.

THE detective found the track which Ethel had left behind her very easy to follow, and when he arrived at Dieppe it only took him a few hours to complete his investigations. Mr. Clews was waiting for him in the public dining-room of the hotel Lion d'Argent, extremely anxious to hear the news, because he imagined that every moment which passed was fraught with danger to Ethel Arbuthnot. The detective's name was Whittaker, and he returned with a smile on his face.

"Is it all right?" demanded Mr. Clews.

"Perfectly," replied Whittaker. "Easiest thing I ever had to do in my life; mere child's play. The men who abducted the young lady took no precautions to cover up their tracks, and the driver of the carriage they employed has informed me of the place where he was to take her."

"Was to take her!" repeated Clews. "What do you mean?"

"He was directed to drive to the Chateau des Arbros, inhabited by Mr. Herbert Gordon."

"Ah! my suspicions were then correct."

"Quite so; but there was an accident on the road and they did not get as far. The abductors carried the girl in their arms the remainder of the distance."

"You have reason to believe she is at the chateau?"

"Every reason."

A gentleman who was sitting at a table near by had been an involuntary listener to the con-

versation, which seemed to have a peculiar interest for him.

"Pardon me," he said, rising, "but I imagine you are friends of Miss Ethel Arbuthnot?"

"We are," answered Clews. "I am the family solicitor—name of Clews."

"And I, sir, am Thomas Woodruffe."

"Indeed!"

"My carriage collided with hers, and I tried to rescue her, but was rendered insensible by a blow on the head from one of the villains, though not much hurt, and ever since I have been striving to find the young lady. If, as I suppose, you are going to take her away and restore her to liberty, will you permit me to accompany you?"

"With the greatest pleasure; the more the merrier," answered the lawyer.

"Shall we start at once?" eagerly asked Tom Woodruffe. "You do not know how much I think of that young lady."

"Yes," said Clews, looking at his watch. "Three o'clock. We will go now. Whittaker, procure a conveyance and get a policeman. We may as well have authority on our side in case Mr. Gordon shows fight."

While Whittaker was gone to execute his commission, the waiter handed Mr. Clews a telegram.

"What another!" he exclaimed. "Allow me to open this, Mr. Woodruffe."

Tom bowed his acquiescence. Hastily tearing open the envelope, he found it was from a doctor at Morecambe, who had previously communicated with him respecting the illness of the baronet.

"Bless me!" he cried, "this is startling news."

"May I ask to what you allude?" said Tom.

"Sir Brandon Arbuthnot is dead!"

"Impossible! He was quite a young man!"

"Fact, sir; I assure you. Three fits in rapid succession. All the male members of the family inclined to apoplexy. Died in a fit!"

"Then Miss Ethel gets the property again?"

"Unquestionably. Sir Brandon dies without issue. There is no one to stand between her and the estates now."

"I am very glad to hear it. She has suffered greatly, though I am sorry for the sad fate of Sir Brandon, who was a personal friend of mine. Ah! well, it is a strange world. We never know which horse will pass the post first."

A few minutes elapsed and Whittaker returned, reporting that all was in readiness, the officers of police being inside the carriage. In less than half-an-hour they were driven to the lonely chateau, which looked drear and dismal in the dull wintry February day.

The clanging bell brought out a servant, who showed them into a handsome and capacious drawing-room. There were none of the bolts and bars that they had expected to find, and Mr. Clews began to suspect that Gordon had sent Ethel to some other and safer hiding place.

They asked for the proprietor of the house, and were told that he would be with them shortly. Presently Herbert Gordon, handsome, well dressed, as usual, insouciant, mildly defiant, entered the room and bowed to the company.

"To what fortunate circumstance, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"I am Mr. Clews, a lawyer; this is Mr. Woodruffe, that a detective, and the fourth person as you see a policeman. We are here in consequence of information which we have received respecting a young lady in whom we take a great interest," was the reply.

"Proceed, sir."

"We have every reason to believe that you have abducted Miss Ethel Arbuthnot, and we demand her at your hands."

"Well."

"If you refuse to give her up, we shall be reluctantly compelled to search the house and take you into custody."

Herbert Gordon carelessly twirled the corner of his tawny moustache.

"I beg to assure you," he rejoined, "that I

am totally unacquainted with any lady named Ethel Arbuthnot."

At this declaration, which he deemed an infamous falsehood, Tom Woodruffe grew greatly excited.

"This denial will not save you," he cried, "for you know perfectly well that Miss Arbuthnot is under your roof."

"You are good enough to make the statement, but as I am not in the habit of stating that which is untrue, it is scarcely necessary for me to contradict you."

"Villain," exclaimed Tom. "Give her up without further trouble or you shall rue it."

A dark frown covered Herbert's face at this language, but he controlled his temper by a violent effort.

"I repeat, gentlemen," he said calmly, "that I do not know anyone who rejoices in the name of Ethel Arbuthnot. You are at liberty to search my house."

"Come on," cried Tom Woodruffe, "let us go through every room from attic to basement."

"By all means."

Tom threw open a folding door, disclosing a prettily furnished boudoir, the prevailing tint of blue and silver, a pleasant fire burnt in the grate, birds, books, and flowers adorned the apartment, and gracefully seated on a lounge was a young lady in elegant morning dress, apparently engaged in the innocent pastime of reading a French novel.

One glance sufficed to show the intruders that it was Ethel Arbuthnot. She looked up in mild surprise, as if mutely protesting against this invasion of her privacy.

"Sir," exclaimed Tom, "this is the lady of whom we are in search."

"Indeed?" replied Herbert.

Ethel put down her book.

"Good morning, Mr. Woodruffe," she said. "Allow me to greet you, Mr. Clews, but at the same time to add, that it is customary for gentlemen to have themselves announced to a lady and not burst into her apartment like a number of burglars."

At this speech Tom Woodruffe and Mr. Clews were dumbfounded. They had expected to find her in tears, and only too glad to hail them as her deliverers from a hateful captivity worse than death.

"Are you here against your will, Miss Arbuthnot?" asked Mr. Clews.

"Not in the slightest degree," she replied.

"Is that really so?"

"No restraint whatever is exercised upon me."

They were still more astonished at this unexpected asseveration. Herbert Gordon now stepped boldly forward.

"Allow me, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "to put an end to this farce, and introduce you to my wife."

"What?" cried Woodruffe, turning pale. "Ethel Arbuthnot your wife?"

"Yes, such is the fact. I told you that there was no such person as Ethel Arbuthnot. She is, and has long been, Mrs. Gordon, though circumstances arose which prevented us from living together."

"I—I didn't know she was married," stammered Tom, to whom this announcement was a rude shock.

"You know it now, and you also know who is her husband," replied Herbert.

Ethel rose and put her hand in that of Gordon.

"And I love him still in spite of all his faults," she said.

"Are you satisfied, gentlemen?" asked Herbert.

"Perfectly," said Mr. Clews.

"I beg to apologise if I have been rude," remarked Tom Woodruffe, "but I assure you that my conduct was dictated by zeal in the lady's behalf. I think she will admit that I have been a true friend to her."

"One of the best I ever had," replied Ethel, "and I shall always feel grateful to you."

"Permit me to congratulate you, Mr. Gordon," he added, "may you both be happy."

It cost him a pang to say this, but he sacri-

ficed his feelings at the shrine of his innate politeness.

"Mr. Clews and Mr. Woodruffe," exclaimed Herbert, "will you accept an invitation to dine with my wife and myself to day?"

"For my part, I am agreeable," replied the lawyer.

Tom made no objection, and the detective seeing he was no longer wanted, quitted the house with the policeman.

"And now," continued Mr. Clews, "let me announce good and bad news. Sir Brandon Arbuthnot died in a fit. Oak Hall is again yours."

"With my fortune and yours, dear Herbert," said Ethel, "we are doubly rich, though your affection is more to me than wealth."

Herbert Gordon bent down and kissed her affectionately.

"You are my only treasure," he murmured.

* * * * *

With the reconciliation between herself and her husband, ended the romantic story of Ethel Arbuthnot, and whatever his youthful follies were, he was shown in after life that a bad beginning may make a good ending. Mrs. Arbuthnot lived with her daughter and Herbert, proving a model mother-in-law, never quarrelling more than once a month with either of them, which was a very moderate allowance of domestic discord for one holding the relationship she did. They lived a very happy life, the past was never alluded to, and there was no occasion for even a captious critic of county morality, like Lady Woodruffe, to ask the startling question in reference to Ethel, WHO'S HER HUSBAND?

[THE END.]

A FIRE AT SCRABBLE HILL.

IN London, as soon as the telegraph gives an alarm of fire, the electric touch of the bell in the engine-house sends the trained horses to their places before the engine, and the men start up like fairies in a pantomime. Away go as brave a set of fellows as ever lived to offer their skilled aid to the gentleman who has taken a nap with a lighted cigar in his mouth and a newspaper over his nose, or to the lady who always will fill her kerosene lamps after they are lighted; and all is done for them that can possibly be accomplished; while consternation prevails in the neighbourhood, and all feel relieved when the slow tinkle of the engine bells denotes that the fire is over.

But at Scrabble Hill things are different. The summer day is calm; people are fishing on bridges, riding up the road, working in the fields, idling on the piazzas, sailing about the pond in boats. Slowly one after the other begins to remark "a queer kind of a smoke at Snooks'." And more slowly still they determine that "if Snooks isn't burning stubble, or the boys haven't made a bonfire, Snooks's house is on fire."

Slowest of all are they in making up their mind that the house really is in flames, and then they stop to compare notes with other people who have made the same sagacious discovery, before going to see how it happened. It is a good way to the Snooks place from everywhere too, and quite a little journey to get there.

Mr. Snooks, in the field hard at work and a little deaf, cannot think for a long while why so many people run up the road and shout at him, and complacently heaps his hay together. Mrs. Snooks, paring apples on the back porch, thinks it a surprise party, and is very much astonished when she is informed that her "up-chamber front room is afire. The 'slavey' is dragged from the cellar, where she is churning and singing selections from revival hymns, by a deputation of admirers. The steady little boy who is "minding the baby," throws it out of the window with promptitude, and it is providen-

tially caught uninjured by somebody, while he jumps after it.

Mrs. Snooks tries to precipitate herself into the flames to save her best bonnet, and is restrained by Grandfather Perkins, who otherwise could have rescued the door mat; and after these efforts, as there is no public engine, no hose, and no available buckets on hand, all concerned sit down on stone fences, while the neighbours who have come to help them watch their house burn down, tell how they happened to look up, and what they thought and said. There are a good many who are sure they could have put the fire out if they had been on hand at an early moment, and there is so much conversation and such an air of festivity, that the Snookses themselves enjoy it, or seem to do so.

Meanwhile the flames crackle merrily, and Grandfather Perkins congratulates his son-in-law on being insured, and tells him that, after all, it may be providential, for the things were getting old, and a new building would be an improvement. The only discontented person is the gentleman connected with the insurance office, who rides over in a gig at a late hour, and hints that the Snookses did the deed themselves. No one ever knows how a fire at Scrabble Hill originates. But the agent pooh-poohs the idea of parlour matches, pipes, defective flues, tramps, and even "spontaneous combustion," which latter idea is suggested by the head boy from the academy.

The crowd of spectators gradually increases—young men calling for their sweethearts and bringing them over as to a circus—until nothing remains of the house but the stone foundations, a stove pipe, and one miraculous wooden mantelpiece that refused to burn. Then the onlookers disperse, some of them taking the Snookses home with them to tea, and all having the air of people who have enjoyed themselves very much, even the Snookses themselves being all the better for a little excitement.

M. K. D.

A REMARKABLE TAILOR.

If Buzzell was not so good a tailor as he might have been, he was, at least, good-natured in the face of reproof, and he had the happy faculty of drawing fun from his infirmity. He had professed to be a tailor for years; his missfits were proverbial, his decent fits very exceptional, and his perfect fits not known.

One day Buzzell met Sam Denham in company. Now Sam was the very beau ideal of a tailor. He would fit a coat so as to make a hump-back look quite comely. Cried Buzzell, as he came upon the assembly:

"Hallo, Sam! How d'e do? Ha! you'n' I ought 'go together, two of the most remarkable tailors in the ke'ntry!—eh, Sam?"

"Well, upon my soul!" ejaculated a bystander. "You must have more brass in your face than I would have believed!"

"Brass!" iterated Snip, with wide-open eyes. "How so?"

"Why to liken yourself to Sam."

"Ho! That's all right," cried Buzzell, with a gushing burst. "Sam knows. An' I say ag'in, we're the two most remarkable tailors anywhere 'round. Sam's the best tailor I ever know'd, and I'm the wust!"

Buzzell had the floor, and carried the day.

THE FAGGOT-MAN AND THE DANDY.

Once upon a time a poor man was trudging along the highway with a heavy load of faggots upon his shoulder, and as the nature of the burden caused him to bend his head so that he could not see what was in advance of him, he continually shouted at the top of his voice, "Make way! Make way, there!" A coxcomb, daintily dressed and perfumed, who thought it

beneath him to turn out for such a clown, held his course, the result of which was, that he ran against the faggots, and got his coat torn in several places. In a towering passion he demanded pay for his coat, which being refused, he caused the poor faggot-man to be brought before a magistrate. On his way into court a kind-hearted lawyer, who had heard the story, whispered into the prisoner's ear what course he should pursue when the accusation had been made.

Arrived in court, the judge heard the dandy's complaint, and then turned to the defendant and asked him what he had to say. But the fellow said nothing. He opened his mouth, and opened his eyes, but not a word did he speak.

"Are you dumb, my good man?" the judge asked.

The man stared vacantly, and shook his head as before.

"Poor fellow!" said a bystander, sympathetically.

"Poor fellow!" cried the dandy, with bursting indignation. "The rascal shouted lustily enough on the highway! He is no more dumb than I am. I heard him cry out till the welkin rang."

"And what did he say?"

"He said, 'Make way! Make way, there!'"

"And why, then," said the magistrate, "did you not make way? The prisoner is discharged."

AVOID UNNECESSARY ANXIETY.

HARDLY a week passes within which there is not the announcement of the sudden death of some prominent man, which is attributed to business troubles, to depression and anxiety, or to overwork.

An all-important practical lesson should be deduced from these numerous, sudden and untimely deaths. They really result from unnecessary anxiety preying upon both mind and body. We say unnecessary anxiety, because it might be avoided by care beforehand. Much of the business trouble which racks and tortures so many men could easily be shunned by better matured plans of business. It arises from habitually rushing ahead without reflecting where one is coming out. One day of thought and five of work is much better than six days of work, and one day of reflection beforehand would often save many long and dreary days of sorrow afterwards.

Think before you enter upon any new plan, of all the chances of mishap, and how to make success certain. No chances of profit compensate for the heavy load of care which many a prominent man carries and tries to conceal from other eyes.

If you would live long, if you would enjoy anything of the sunshine and flowers of life, think beforehand and avoid as far as possible all sources of unnecessary anxiety.

An embarrassed actor bounded on the stage of a San Francisco theatre recently, in a scene depicting a robbery in a hotel office, and shouted: "Gag the safe, while I blow open the night clerk."

In a circus at Paris (Ill.) a suddenly crazed young lady ran into the ring, embraced the clown, and declared that he must become her husband. The audience said it was the first original joke that they had heard in a circus ring for more than twenty-five years.

At a wedding, according to the frantic reporter of the local paper, "the jellies upon the bridal supper table were pure amber masses of quivering translucence, catching the wine-coloured prisms of perfumed light and holding them in tremulous mirrors of rosy beauty." That's enough to send a man off to propose to the ugliest woman he knows, on the chance of having such things as that for supper.

THE TEST OF TEMPER.

DID you ever overset your mucilage bottle? If it was only once, you'll not be likely to have forgotten it, for it is the royal test of temper.

I remember hearing that someone had said I had a bad temper, and it seemed to me a most unwarrantable slander until I overset my mucilage bottle. Then I knew that I had not known myself before. I had borne very calmly, and with some attempt at dignity, the reproaches of an enraged cook, in the abusive stage of intoxication. I had smiled, and not deceitfully, upon the man who emptied a cup of coffee over my best black coat. I had calmly, with a good deal of good humour, offered my services as a good-tempered parson to the giant who trod on my toes in a crowd; and had lost the last train to London without even desiring to shriek; but when, having finished my letter to my beloved K. C.—let me hasten to explain that those initials are masculine—I jammed that long-handled brush into the mucilage bottle, and then hit my hand against it, oversetting it as coolly as though I did it for the purpose—then I found that my accuser was right.

"Know thyself," said— Well, I forget who it was. It's neither Scripture nor Shakespeare, but it is good advice, and in order to know yourself get a mucilage bottle. You'll be sure to knock it over some day, and then—R. H.

LINES TO MISS M. C.

TWILIGHT musings, hours of twilight,
How I hail their coming feet,
Then to plunge 'mid fancy's bowers,
Halcyon memories there to greet;
There to view again the features
Lustrous with true beauty's beam,
There to list to cherish'd accents
Rippling like a silv'ry stream.

Twilight hours! memory loosens
Every fetter wrought by day,
Merges in one grand arena
Where man's earnest fancies play;
Then the one whose face is sculptured
On the tablet of the heart,
Comes, and with her queenly presence,
Sunders every care apart.

Sorrow's cloud would have a lining
That these sentiments untarnished
Bright as gold, could I but know
From another's bosom flow;
Like a missing link discover'd,
Constance, to fill the void,
Would engrave in golden letters:
"Mutual friendship unalloyed."

C. A. P.

LINKED LOVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clarice Villiers; or, What Love Feared."

CHAPTER IX.

THE ADMIRAL'S APPEAL.

I have nursed for years,
In silence and in solitude, the flame
Which doth consume me. HEMANS.

"MR. PONSONBY, I fear that I am too exacting."

"By no means, Sir Cynric. It affords me unfeigned pleasure to be of any service to you."

"Youthful though you are, you have the fine tone which characterised the ancient school of thoughtful courtesy. There are few young men

of to-day who would consent to devote their spare hours to the solace of a moping, almost imbecile, old fellow like me."

Valentine Ponsonby laughed pleasantly.

"Are you not too severe on the rising generation, Sir Cynric?" he said. "Perhaps we have lost some of the polish of the beaux and wits of a bygone day; but, honestly, I do not think that we are all bad and selfish fellows."

"You are not. So much is certain. I should not like to answer for many more. Even Oscar, my own grandson, who owes so much to me, treats the blind old veteran with cool neglect."

Mr. Ponsonby did not reply. His experience of the family life at Caerlau had taught him that the subject was a delicate and dangerous one.

"Do you not think so?" asked the admiral, in a sharp, querulous tone, as if the young man's silence annoyed him.

"Pardon me, Sir Cynric, but it is a matter upon which I cannot hazard an opinion."

"True. I had no right to ask you for it. But my verdict upon Oscar is just notwithstanding."

The pair were seated in one of the suite of the admiral's rooms, a lofty antique chamber, which commanded a view of the Channel, and through whose widely-opened casements came fresh and crisp the salt breezes which the old sailor loved so well.

The apartment was plainly but handsomely furnished, and a rigid and methodical system reigned in the arrangement of the furniture, which recalled the precision and formality of a grand cabin, and was well adapted to the necessarily unvarying habits and movements of the sightless.

Like very many of the other rooms of the castle, this apartment contained a pianoforte, upon which Valentine Ponsonby had just been performing one of Beethoven's grandest and most difficult pieces for the old man's amusement.

"It is not of my grandson, however, that I would speak to you," continued Sir Cynric Rhys, "but of one who is not—at least at present—a member of my family; one who is also a stranger to you, and concerning whom, therefore, I think I may solicit your unbiased opinion."

"I will endeavour to give it."

"I allude to Viscount Alan Fitzvesci. I know your shrewd discrimination and ability. I feel that I can trust you entirely. I have a full assurance that as your eyes see things so also would they appear to mine if sight could come to them once more. I have but the words and voices of man and woman whereby to guess their characters, and can no more read their countenances—those best indexes to their souls. You have still that blessed privilege. What think you then of Alan Fitzvesci?"

Valentine Ponsonby hesitated.

"He is a man of honour, who has done his duty to England, and of whom the world speaks well," responded the young man, slowly, after an interval. Then he added, with more animation: "He comes too of a good old stock."

"Ah! you know something of the Fitzvesci family?"

"By report, of course. And Lord Fitzvesci's military services are known to all who read the daily papers."

"Yes, he is a good soldier. But I do not allude to that. If you had a sister would you like to see her become his wife?"

Valentine gave a violent start, and gazed at the old man's fine calm face with an earnestness not remote from terror.

"I have no sister, Sir Cynric," he said, after a pause, "and if I had she could be no wife for Lord Fitzvesci."

"Oh, I don't mean from disparity of social position," cried the admiral, with a suspicion of impatience in his tone. "I simply wish to know whether if you had a sister eligible to become Lord Alan's wife you would entrust her happiness into his keeping?"

The curious questioning expression did not quit Valentine Ponsonby's face, neither did he give the direct reply which the admiral desired.

"I think any woman's happiness might be safely entrusted to Lord Fitzvesci's keeping," was the young man's reply, given with some empressement.

The blind man's face expressed extreme satisfaction.

"You have relieved my mind of some very anxious doubts, Mr. Ponsonby, and I thank you—thank you much. I presume that you can readily guess why I propounded the question."

Ponsonby replied in the negative.

"The deuce you cannot! Then Lord Alan's attentions cannot have been very obtrusive at any rate. Well, he is here, at my desire mainly, that he may win the heart and hand of my granddaughter."

If the admiral had possessed the faculty of sight the view of Valentine Ponsonby's countenance would have afforded him an unpleasant surprise. For self-contained and self-controlled as was the young manager in general his handsome face was suffused with instant crimson at the old man's words. He made no reply to the revelation, nor did the admiral appear to expect any, but continued:

"Yes, I cannot in the nature of things last long. The three score years and ten which form the limit of human life have been long overpassed by me. I desired this union with my whole heart and soul ten years ago, before Fitzvesci's regiment went abroad. But of course then Winefrede was but a child. How anxiously have I waited for his return. One of the many risks of the soldier's life might have removed him, and then the very object for which I lived would have been lost, then the past could never have been redeemed."

The old man raised his hand to his brow with a curious wavering motion, and seemed for a space absorbed in thought.

"What was I saying, Mr. Ponsonby?" he asked, suddenly.

"You were speaking of Lord Fitzvesci and—of Miss Glendyr."

The words seemed uttered by an effort.

"Ah, yes. You will bear with me. I hope, Mr. Ponsonby, when my memory fails me. There are times, as you are aware, when even sense and reason appear to wander."

"Owain has told me, Sir Cynric," responded Valentine, respectfully. "But is it well now to speak of these matters if they excite you prejudicially?"

"Yes, it is, even at any risk. And the reason is that I look to you for aid and co-operation."

"To me, Sir Cynric! I am merely Mrs. Glendyr's manager. There are those of your own family to fulfil such needs."

"You are altogether wrong, Mr. Ponsonby. To whom can I look? You are, I feel, too shrewd not to have seen that my daughter, a good woman enough, is wrapped up in the trivialities of her daily life. Oscar is but a boy and an unstable one."

"There is Miss Glendyr herself—the person principally concerned."

"Yes, and of course all the legitimate influence which I can exert upon her I shall bring to bear. The girl's sense of duty to me may do much. Lord Fitzvesci's attentions will, I hope, effect more. Still women are unstable and not to be counted on. Winefrede must marry Fitzvesci—must, I say—and I look to you to lend any aid towards the union which is possible for you."

The red flush had fled from Valentine's face, and he had become pale to the very lips which were set so firmly. His forehead was contracted as if with pain, and his eyes were dull and listless. He looked like one who has become suddenly prematurely old.

"What can I do?" he asked presently in a hoarse, changed voice. "Who am I that you should ask so strange a duty of me?"

"You may be able to do much. You came

here as the manager of some miserable business details—some overlooking of mines and farms. Such were the sole duties of your predecessors, but such are the least of yours. From the first moment when we met your voice thrilled some chord—I know not how—of my heart; my fingers traced in your face some subtle resemblances which made my affection flow out to you in no stinted flood. You are now my friend—almost I feel as my son. Will you refuse the old man's love? Will you deny your support to one so helpless and stricken?"

"Heaven knows that I will not, Sir Cynric," said Valentine in a broken and troubled voice. "In all that I can do command me freely. But what influence have I, a stranger, with Miss Glendyr in such a matter as this of which you speak? There must be others—friends of the family—better fitted for such an office."

"I tell you no, Mr. Ponsonby—Valentine," the admiral replied, with energy. "There is but one who could fulfil the post—one who knows its vital importance."

"Why not call upon him, Sir Cynric?"

"I cannot. Swire is not now in England. He is somewhere in Holland, and is out of my reach."

"Swire?"

"Yes. The old friend to whom we owe your presence amongst us—bless him for it. Mr. Ponsonby—dear Valentine, take his place as my friend in this business. You have given me back this young man whom I would gain as my grandson from the jaws of very death. That was a plain pointing of the finger of Providence. Help to complete the work."

"You are strangely earnest in this, Sir Cynric," said Ponsonby, still in that curious broken voice.

"Ay, I am. Only by its success can I dare to face death. It must be—it shall be. Ah, am I dreaming again?" and the old man's voice dwindled to a whisper, and his hands were extended vaguely. "Who spoke? 'Reparation.' Yes, I will make reparation! Do not look at me thus. Do not make that dull accusing whisper like a funeral bell in my ear. All shall be well. All shall be atoned for. Give me time—time—be merciful—have I not lived on for that?"

The admiral's voice died out in incoherent and chaotic words, and his grand old face was bedewed with a sweat of agony.

"His mind wanders," said Valentine to himself. "O Heaven of mercy, this trial to which he bids me is very bitter! But it shall be borne."

He placed his hand soothingly upon Sir Cynric Ehy's arm. The old man started and turned his sightless eyes towards his companion in sudden alarm.

"Who is that? Owain Dinas?"

"It is I, Sir Cynric—Valentine Ponsonby."

"Ah, yes. What have I been saying?"

"You were speaking of Miss Glendyr and Lord Fitzvesci," replied Ponsonby with an effort.

"Nothing else?"

"No."

"And you—?"

"Will aid in what you require if it lie in my power."

The admiral grasped the young man's hand eagerly.

"That is well. Thank you—thank you!"

Some moments of silence passed. The admiral, exhausted by his excitement, leaned back in his chair, breathing heavily. Valentine sat pale and rigid.

"Do you know why I need the solace of music so often?" the former asked suddenly.

The young man answered in the negative.

"You remember, perhaps, why and when Saul asked for the harp of the sweet singer of Israel?"

Valentine hesitated.

"Ah, you do not like to reply. Do not fear. To you I will say what I tell to few. It was when the evil spirit possessed the warrior king. So it is with me. It is when that most evil spirit of an enduring remorse makes me his own that I ask for the soft sounds which can make

me—for all too short a space—forget the past. But let us say no more of this now. I have your promise. Please ring for Owain. I am strangely weak and will snatch some repose."

Valentine Ponsonby was about to do the admiral's bidding, when the old man gave a deep groan, and rising suddenly made a couple of steps forward, and would have fallen to the ground had not the young man caught him in his arms.

In great alarm, Valentine reached across to the bell-rope by the fireside and pulled it violently. At the instant that his hand touched it his ears caught the sounds of girlish laughter in the corridor beyond, proceeding from Winefrede and Judith Vaneck who were descending the stairs.

The next instant they burst into the room with a scared look on each face. Valentine was placing the old man again in his chair as they entered. Miss Glendyr seemed to take in the scene at a glance.

"Grandpapa!" she cried, in affright, "what is it?" And she was by the old man's side in an instant.

He was not insensible, but was muttering incoherently. As he felt the girl's soft palm touch his own he grasped it feebly in his right hand and drew it over to meet that of Valentine, which he held in his left.

"Fitzvesci—Alan!" he murmured, "take her! Winefrede—your husband—atonement—at last!" and sank back insensible.

At the contact of their hands thus involuntarily made Valentine's face became deadly pale, while the proud, angry blood flooded Winefrede's haughty, beautiful countenance from temple to cheek despite her apprehensions. At that instant Owain Dinas appeared at the open doorway.

"Good heavens," he cried, "the admiral has another attack. Lead him to me, young ladies, if you please. And you, Mr. Ponsonby, do also leave the room as quick as you can."

Miss Glendyr knew that the old major-domo's word was law in such cases, and that her grandfather could be safely entrusted to his care. Pressing a tender kiss on the wrinkled and venerable brow she turned and left the room swiftly, sorrow and concern in her eyes, but the angry flush still on her face. Valentine and Miss Vaneck followed. As they did so Judith looked at her companion rather maliciously, as she remarked:

"We have been assisting at a farce, seemingly, Mr. Ponsonby."

"Say rather a tragedy," was the sole response.

CHAPTER X.

A CONFERENCE.

Yet think not but I mark, and smile
To mark thy poor and selfish wife. Scott.

FAIRIES at Caerlau were hardly proceeding in a manner well pleasing to several individuals there. Three days had passed since the interview between Sir Cynric Ehy and Valentine Ponsonby. The old man had recovered from his seizure, as he had done from many previous ones, and was himself again.

The new manager went about his varied and onerous duties with the same energy and assiduity as had heretofore characterised him. A thought graver and more pale of face perhaps, that was all. But neither Miss Judith Vaneck nor Viscount Fitzvesci were satisfied with the aspect of affairs.

The governess was by no means a bad woman. She had fulfilled her duties towards Winefrede Glendyr with the most scrupulous and painstaking care; she would have scorned a mean action and shrank from falsehood in the ordinary concerns of life. But she was a woman who loved much the comforts and elegancies of the upper circles of our social existence. She was poor, and had a great relish for the luxuries only possible to the wealthy.

She could hardly hope to stay on at Caerlau Castle indefinitely as a companion, now that

Winefrede did not require her aid as a governess. In many ways Judith Vanneck was a shrewd young woman, and took count of these facts. They pointed to one inevitable conclusion. She must obtain an establishment—a good establishment of her own. In other words, she must marry.

For some time preceding the coming of Valentine Ponsonby to Caerlau Miss Vanneck had strong hopes that she possessed sufficient influence in a certain quarter to render her chance of such a matrimonial alliance as she longed for at least possible, perhaps even probable.

Mr. Oscar Glendyr, on his return from college, had been attracted by the beauty of his sister's governess, and after a fashion not unusual amongst very young men, for whom women somewhat older than themselves have a strong attraction, Oscar fell the victim to that kind of attachment for Judith which is known as "calf love," a state of feeling which may rise into genuine and enduring passion, or on the other hand prove evanescent as morning dew.

Much to her annoyance and disappointment, Miss Vanneck fancied that she detected some symptoms of such evanescence in the sentiments of Oscar on their last parting before the young man's late trip in the "Osprey." It was during his absence and her own uneasiness as to his constancy that Valentine Ponsonby arrived at the castle. Judith was very much struck by the appearance of the new manager, and the favourable impression which he made upon her mind was strengthened by subsequent social intercourse in the family circle at Caerlau.

Had she confessed the truth to her own heart Miss Vanneck would have been constrained to acknowledge that the handsome Englishman had unconsciously gone far to win her heart in her own despite. Nor need she have scrupled much to break the slight tie which bound her to Oscar Glendyr.

It was far from improbable that the young man would himself do so ere many weeks, or suffer it to drop away by cool neglect. But there were two reasons, each insuperable, why the young governess could not dare to cherish this new sweet sentiment.

One of these was that Valentine Ponsonby was a poor man, and Judith Vanneck felt that she could never become a poor man's wife. The other and even more conclusive deterrent reason was, that not by a single word or look had the new manager shown regard or even the ordinary admiration which a man's eyes or tongue may often express to a pretty woman, while still making it perfectly clear to her that no love mixes with his appreciation of her beauty or her talent.

At all their meetings Valentine was scrupulously attentive and deferential to Miss Vanneck as it was his custom to be to all her sex, but nothing more. This was not pleasant to Judith. Why she did not know. She could never be anything to the poor, dependent of Mrs. Glendyr, and why then should she feel piqued that he was heartwhole from her arrows whether of beauty or of wit, and made no movement of bowing the knee at her shrine?

This was a question which with a little feminine inconsistency Judith Vanneck did not attempt to solve. It was sufficient to her that the young man's indifference did cause her daily annoyance which almost reached pain, and which certainly overpassed that limit when she had satisfied herself that if her charms had not conquered Mr. Ponsonby he was not the less a captive.

The light jesting about the new manager in which Judith had indulged to Winefrede, and which the young heiress had repressed so promptly and almost angrily, overlay a deep conviction of Miss Vanneck's mind—namely, that struggle against it as he would, conceal it bravely as he might, Valentine Ponsonby loved Winefrede Glendyr with all the strength and passion and intensity of a man's first love.

That he had struggled against it with his whole energy, that he had conquered it to the degree which enabled him successfully to con-

ceal every manifestation of the sentiment from her who had caused it, Miss Vanneck knew. More than that, she realised by some instinct how bitter the battle had been, and how manlike and worthy was he who could so have struggled and subdued.

She felt that it was the victory of an honourable and noble pride. Ah, why was not this victor rich; why did he not love her instead of the cold, haughty girl who should inherit the broad acres of Caerlau? Judith Vanneck knew well the folly of such questioning, but she returned to it again and again.

The governess was well convinced that Winefrede had not, like herself, penetrated Valentine Ponsonby's secret. Nor if Miss Glendyr had done so, was there any danger of a response on her part. Judith thought. Winefrede was far too proud, had far too much good feeling to play the coquette even with her admirers of her own social standing, and she would certainly not flirt with her mother's manager.

Probably if Winefrede discovered his infatuation it would not even have the power to move her to passing anger. She would loftily ignore it as a folly unworthy of her second thought. But reason after this fashion as Miss Vanneck might her vexation at the unconscious conquest which her pupil had made went far to turn her own penchant for the manager into absolute dislike and covert enmity.

Judith Vanneck had, however, a farther cause for disquiet in the fact that since his return to Caerlau Mr. Oscar Glendyr was neither so attentive nor so embarrassed as he had been before his departure. He was changed too very much. A great deal of the light-hearted, boyish gaiety which had characterised him was departed. It would have seemed that the terrible hours of peril passed while the "Osprey" was driving helplessly upon the Pikehead Reef had sobered him and superinduced a manly tone wanting before.

In one of their brief and infrequent private interviews, moreover, Oscar Glendyr spoke to Miss Vanneck upon a certain subject in a manner which would have delighted the heart of Sir Cynric Rhys, and made the old man view his grandson in a different light.

"Of course, you know all my sister's notions and fancies," said young Glendyr one evening when he and Miss Vanneck had sought the conservatory's cool shades as a temporary haven of rest from the heat and radiance and bustle of the ball-room. "Girls always talk everything over with each other. Now tell me, has she made up her mind about Alan?"

"I really haven't the very slightest idea."

"Oh, come now, that's altogether too bad, you know. Winnie must tell you. She has no one else to tell, because the mamma and she don't get on well together on such subjects. Winnie is a sensible girl, I'll say that for her. Not a grain of gush about her, not one. Now the mamma—but I need say nothing more, you know her. Well, to return to the subject. Is Winnie ready to accept Alan if he proposes?"

"Fancy a more altogether absurd question. How on earth should I know?"

"If you do not, who does? And I must know something definite. Fitzvesci says his attentions have been pronounced enough, and he can't see that my sister has given him one scintilla of encouragement."

"Neither can I."

"Well, that will not do at all. Alan will not make the foolish girl an offer of his hand unless—unless, in fact, he is sure that Winnie will accept him."

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who will not put it to the touch
To win or lose it all."

quoted Miss Vanneck.

"Win or lose it all. It is not Fitzvesci alone who will win or lose, but I also."

"You, how is that? Oh! I see. You will win an eligible brother-in-law."

"It isn't altogether that, although I am anxious to stand in that relation to Alan too. He is a noble fellow—proud as Lucifer, and a

little cold, perhaps, even to his intimates, but brave and generous. Why on that night of terror, when he and I stood upon the breaking deck of the poor "Osprey" and heard her ribs and timbers cracking, and felt beneath us the throb of the sea, which surged through the hold, and beat like a giant's pulse against the under side of the wet planks on which we stood—in that moment of peril Alan would not take the place of comparative safety which was his of right, as guest and stranger. 'Waive etiquette, Oscar,' he said, 'and go first, for your mother's sake. I am a soldier, and to risk my life is my business. I swear to you that I will not predecease you.' Yes, I could not desire an alliance with a better man. But there is more than this."

"Indeed," said Miss Vanneck, with marked curiosity. "And what may that be?"

"Mind, this is a family secret which I would confide to none but you, and I tell it to you in part to secure your co-operation."

"Proceed."

"You have of course a general idea that both Winefrede and myself will inherit great wealth."

"Undoubtedly. Both Mrs. Glendyr's estates and those of Sir Cynric Rhys."

"Quite so. But I have very recently learned that Winefrede's share will only be hers on condition that she become the wife of Alan Fitzvesci. There is some mystery about the matter which I cannot fathom. But of the fact there is no doubt."

"That appears to me rather absurd. To whom else but to your sister and yourself can the property or estates descend?"

"I do not know. But my grandfather told me, under the seal of secrecy, that if my sister does not wed Lord Fitzvesci the portion which should have been hers will be otherwise bequested."

"Well?"

"Well!" repeated Oscar. "I think it far enough from well. Can you guess the consequences?"

"No."

"They will be that the portion which should have been Winnie's will be entirely alienated from the family, and my share will be divided between my sister and myself. I don't know that I am a particularly covetous fellow; but I must say that I don't view the possible prospective loss of half my expectations with coolness, and I shall be horribly angry with Winnie if she should be so idiotic as to lose a good husband, a fine inheritance, and be the means also of defrauding me."

CHAPTER XI.

CONFIDENCES.

Fitted to thy pretty part,
With a little horde of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

TENNISON.

"WINNIE, half of Lord Fitzvesci's leave of absence has expired."

It was Miss Glendyr who spoke. Mother and daughter were seated in the luxurious boudoir of the elder lady.

"Yes, I suppose so." There was not the slightest intonation of interest in the girl's voice.

"One would scarcely fancy that you were aware of the fact," said Miss Glendyr, with some pique at her daughter's indifference.

Winefrede opened her large eyes with a little surprise.

"Surely we do not expect our guests to stay with us for ever, mamma?"

"No, but we wish their stay to be a pleasant one while it lasts, and that they should take away with them pleasant memoirs of the past—and hopes for the future."

The girl raised her shapely shoulders by an almost imperceptible movement and an expression of weariness came over her beautiful face.

"Mamma," she cried, deprecatingly, "have some pity upon me. My life is being made almost intolerable by the constant hints and innuendoes levelled at me—"



[A SHOCK.]

"Because you are neglecting your own interest and happiness, Winnie," interposed Mrs. Glendyr.

"Grandpapa, yourself, and Oscar bait me at every opportunity, and yesterday Miss Vanneck had actually the audacity to attempt the same pleasant pastime."

"Naturally, she has her pupil's welfare at heart."

"She will not step out of her province again, I fancy. Oscar is bad enough with his mysterious hints of some terrible loss or suffering which will come to me if I do not throw myself at the head of the first of his friends whom he may choose for me."

"Don't use such odiously vulgar expressions, Winefrede. And don't be violent and unladylike. You are altogether too dreadfully trying! Oh, you will bring on my hysterical affection! Give me the fan—no, the vinaigrette! Open the door—no, shut the window!"

Winefrede obeyed the contradictory orders to the best of her ability. Mrs. Glendyr leaned back in her chair apparently prostrated. It was now her daughter's turn to take up the subject.

"I think the least that is due to me," she remarked, with a tolerably pronounced air of indignation, "is that I should be made acquainted with the nature of this terrible penalty which will overtake me if I do not relinquish the woman's privilege and woo, instead of being wooed."

"I do not know it myself, Winefrede, nor is it likely that Oscar does. You are aware that my father expects us to rest content with doing that which he requires, without exact explanations. And your latter words are quite childish. You have discouraged your—your suitor in every way. If you will change this course, or if you will authorise me or Oscar to drop a few hints you will soon have him at your feet."

"I have no desire to see him there," was the cold response.

"You are a wilful—incorrigible child! You have no consideration for me or for others. If it were not that I know it cannot be so, I should

imagine that you had formed some other attachment—to young Ap-Howell, for instance—"

A discreet tap sounded on the door. It was Miss Vanneck who came to make some arrangements about a forthcoming archery meeting at Caerlau. As Winefrede seized the opportunity of escape, Judith threw a curious glance at her pupil as she hurried past, and noted that the girl's proud face was all one burning crimson.

* * * * *

"Ah, Mr. Ponsonby, the admiral has been watching a long time for you; but he has got so tired that he has gone to sleep."

Old Owain Dinas had intercepted the manager as the latter was crossing the back lawn from the terrace in order to gain his own rooms by a side entrance. Valentine Ponsonby was looking very pale, worn and distract, and had been about to hasten past Owain, with a kindly nod, but something of reproach which was discernible through the old man's respectful tones caused the manager to stop abruptly.

"I am sorry if I have disappointed Sir Cynric," he said. "I was not aware that he expected or required me this morning."

"Ah, yes, and indeed he did, Mr. Ponsonby, and when he is disappointed now, look you, it is very bad for him, yes, indeed. But it is not for me to say that to you, sir, for you are like a son to him. And he do need every comfort now, when his prains do waver!"

And the old man tapped his wrinkled brow significantly.

"It isn't so bad as that, Owain," responded Valentine, throwing off his absorbed look and simulating cheerfulness. "It is only the weakness of advanced age, and must have been coming on for a long time."

"No, it was not, Mr. Ponsonby. "It is only since—ah, yes, since you have been at Caerlau—not as I think it is you, sir. Ah, no! But it did begin from then much worse, and now, now that my lord is at the Castle the admiral do suffer more and more."

"You are not complimentary to Lord Fitzvesci and me, Owain," replied Valentine, with a smile.

"Oh, and indeed it is not that, no, indeed. There is no need for me to say that I love you as if you were a Welshman born, Mr. Valentine," asserted the old man with affectionate familiarity. "Yes, as if you were a true Cymry. And Lord Fitzvesci is a very good man, very proud, I do think, but that is as a lord should be. No, no, it is not the young lord nor yourself, Mr. Ponsonby, that do cause my master's trouble. But—tut! tut! you do know as well as Owain does." And the old man looked at Valentine cunningly.

"Indeed I do not," returned Ponsonby, "and" he added, hesitatingly, "perhaps it is not well that we should speak of these family matters."

"Tut! tut! what matter is it? I was not going to speak of any secrets—what secret is there for me to know?—none whatever. But I do know, and you do know that Sir Cynric has the Saesnach officer here to carry off our Miss Winefrede. Ah, yes, that is so. And if my lord does not win our young lady, why, then the admiral he will break his heart and die. Ah, yes. And Miss Winefrede will not marry Lord Alan Fitzvesci; ah, no, by no means whatever!"

A quick inquiring glance flashed from Valentine's eyes.

"You can know nothing about that, it seems to me, Owain, he replied, gravely.

"I do know, however. And I am very sorry, for it will kill the old master I do love. I do not want to lose our winsome Miss Winefrede, no, indeed. And though my lord is a very good man he has not the warm heart of a Welshman—or of you, Mr. Ponsonby. But, nevertheless I do wish that the marriage may come about, or the admiral he will die. Ah, yes;" and Owain went his way, shaking his head sagely and leaving Valentine a prey to unpleasant cogitations.

(To be Continued.)



[THE IDOL SHATTERED.]

UNDER A LOVE CHARM; OR, A SECRET WRONG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"
 "The Mystery of His Love; or, Who
 Married Them?" &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MISS CRAWLEY.

Mary, I believed thee true,
 And I was blest in so believing;
 But, ah! my heart is broken now—
 Thou art so fair and so deceiving.

THE veiled lady went on swiftly. Athelstane followed closely. At last she paused before a door in the wall—a door grown over with ivy. There was a brass bell handle fixed in the brick-work, round which was traced in black letters on a white china plate the word "visitors." This bell the veiled woman pulled, and almost immediately the door fell back. The lady sprang in with a light step, and the door closed with a loud bang.

Athelstane Rodney stood outside in the cold rain and wondered whether he had not been an idiot for his pains.

"And yet if ever I saw Clemence Melrose it was just an hour ago when on the platform at Baker Street yonder girl raised her veil."

Then he remembered all his cousin Eva's strange warnings and terrible assertions, and he asked himself if it were possible that Clemence had in truth some ugly secret to hide, and while he thought of all this a strange feeling came over him.

It was as if his love for Miss Melrose were shaken to its very foundations. It had been a

giant edifice, this love; it had been reared to a great height, and it had shut out from him as it were the sight of all other things under the sun, but now just for a moment a sentiment like loathing possessed him, and this great edifice of his love rocked on its foundations.

What if all along he had been miserably and cruelly deceived? What if even now Clemence were inside that house? What if there she had gone clandestinely so meet some lover—some man who had been her lover before, and whom she had perhaps need to pacify?

The thought was too horrible. Athelstane felt that he must find out whether or not the veiled woman were Clemence, or he should go mad. The first thing to be done was to find out who was the occupant of the house, but how was he to make inquiries at that time of night? All the shops were shut; all the private houses had closed their shutters. It was night and almost bleak, and the rain fell fast.

Athelstane went and stood far back in the road and looked up at the high wall fringed with ivy, the door in the wall, the bell with the word "Visitors" in black letters on a white plate surrounding it. As for the house itself, it was close to the gate and slated; he could see only the roof and one small window in it, and two tall chimneys.

All this was revealed to him by the light of a lamp which stood outside close to the door in the wall. Athelstane Rodney would have pulled the bell and demanded to see the master of the house if he had known who to ask for, but he did not know. He hurried away at length into the main road, hoping to find some shop open, and he had the great satisfaction of seeing a large corner public-house with flaring gas lights and announcements respecting "Meux and Co.'s entire" and "good stabling" painted all down one side of the dwelling.

From the inside came the sound of loud laughter and drunken songs. Athelstane walked first into a crowded tap-room, but he left that immediately and went into a cosy room on the opposite side of the passage, where

a fire was burning brightly and a gentleman, possibly of the commercial order, was eating a supper of hot roast fowl and baked potatoes, accompanied by bottled ale.

Athelstane removed his hat politely, and asked the commercial man's permission to enter, since it was raining hard, and the individual informed him that he was heartily welcome, whereupon Athelstane drew forth a chair, divested himself of his overcoat, and sat down. He then called for a little hot brandy, since he felt cold, and he began, after obtaining the permission of the man who was dining, to smoke a cigar.

"I wonder if you can tell me, sir," said Athelstane, "the name of the person who occupies a large brick house which stands in its own grounds in the lane, the first turning to the right after you pass this."

"The next terrace, I think you must mean—old Miss Crawley's," replied the commercial man. "She is an old maiden lady of eccentric habits. She is a kind of charitable patroness of all sorts of people."

"In that case," said Athelstane, "I shall apply to her on behalf of a poor acquaintance of mine."

"If your acquaintance is a man," said the commercial, "she is not so likely to befriend him. She hates men, having been once jilted in her youth. She is a patroness of young women who have made secret or false marriages, or no marriages at all, as the case may be. She has a nursery full of children, they say—children whose parents have abandoned them or who are ashamed to acknowledge them openly."

Athelstane could hardly restrain the cry of rage and pain which rose to his lips, but he did restrain it, and he said calmly:

"Just as I anticipated, and the person who is in such distress is a girl whose husband has abandoned her and gone to Australia. Could she have a home at this Miss Crawley's?"

"I daresay the old lady would do everything

for her, but she would be very sharp in making inquiries."

"She may be as sharp as she likes," said poor Athelstane to himself, "if only she will let me find out something about Clemence."

He made a few more inquiries of the good-tempered man of commerce, and the answers that he received confirmed him in the belief that the house in question was really the one occupied by Miss Crawley.

He hastily paid for the brandy, wished the man good-night, and strode out into the rain. A few minutes' rapid walking brought him again to the door of Laurel House, as the dwelling he afterwards found was called.

He boldly pulled the bell, which was surrounded by the word "Visitors," and in about a minute he heard footsteps on the other side. Then the door fell back and disclosed a long, lighted, flagged-covered passage, leading into a bright, neat, spacious hall. A neat, elderly woman-servant, who wore a white cap and carried a shaded lamp, looked at him rather inquisitively.

"Can I see Miss Crawley?" he asked; and he boldly tendered his card, a neat one, with "Mr. Athelstane Rodney" engraved thereon.

He saw that the name conveyed nothing startling to the elderly woman, who glanced at it, then said, curtly:

"Please to walk in, sir; it's late; but I'll ask missis."

So Athelstane followed the maid down the passage and into the hall, and after that into a dull, cold little room, with a fireless grate and a bookcase with glass doors. The woman placed a chair for the young gentleman and left the room.

He waited ten minutes, which seemed an hour, and then the woman returned, and said that her "missis" would see him. Accordingly the young man, whose heart beat fast with excitement, followed the maid across the hall and up a handsome staircase into a large, rather dimly-lighted, and faded room with a great bay window, at the back of the house. Evidently this was the drawing-room, as the tables, covered with books and china, and the pale blue damask furniture testified.

A little crooked old woman, leaning on a stick, and wearing spectacles, stood near a fire at the further end of the apartment. The maid withdrew, and Athelstane bowed low, and then advanced to meet the old lady, who was muffled in a great shawl of yellow silk. She was withered and wrinkled, hump-backed and ugly, and was just one's idea of a witch or an evil fairy godmother.

"Well," she said, in sharp, rasping tones; "have you come about any of the children? I tell you plainly beforehand that if you have come with proper authority you can take any of them away; but unless you can show that you have such authority, not one of them leaves the house."

Miss Crawley struck her stick loudly against the floor to give force and emphasis to her words.

"I assure you, madame, that I have not the slightest reason to be interested in any of the children in this house."

"Then what d'ye want?" interrupted the rude old lady, again striking her stick against the floor.

"I am come about the business that brought a lady here about an hour ago. She is an intimate friend of mine, and I was annoyed to find that she had come here alone—and so late."

Athelstane paused a moment, and then said:

"Has she gone home yet?"

"No; she has not," Miss Crawley replied, with provoking calmness. "She won't leave for another hour."

"Tell me the reason of that. I am her affianced husband, and I have a right to know all that concerns her."

The crooked old woman burst into a discordant peal of laughter.

"You have no right in this house—not even if the woman were your wife; yet—Ah, I know more family secrets, young man, than

any family doctor. The young woman you ask about is pretty enough to turn the heads of all the dignitaries of the bench—all the functionaries of the law courts, and a noble bench of bishops; and yet they would all be idiots for their pains. The young person in question will no more marry you than she will the man in the moon."

"Has she told you so?" asked Athelstane, calmly, but he was beside himself with rage the whole while.

"If she had," replied the disagreeable old woman, "I would not tell you. If she likes to make an idiot of you I will not spoil sport," and the ugly old creature grinned in a perfectly diabolical manner.

Athelstane saw that it would be quite useless to question this terrible old dame, renowned for her charities towards women and children, but perfectly fiendish in her spite towards men.

"It is needless to say," he said, "that if my surmise is correct all is at an end between this lady and myself."

"I know nothing about your surmise," the ugly old woman answered, and she took a pinch of snuff out of a gold box. "I don't know, and I don't want to know, and I won't speak another word to you, if you stay here all night."

As the old dame spoke she raised a hand and rang it with all her might. Athelstane bowed to her with a lofty calm, and made his escape before the servant appeared to show him out. As he was following this person downstairs a thought struck him. He tapped her on the shoulder, and put a piece of gold into her hand.

"Tell me," he said, "where is the lady—the beautiful lady, who came here about an hour ago, and what brought her here?"

"To ask for a child," the woman answered, slowly.

"Her child?" Athelstane asked the question in a tone which impatience rendered hoarse.

"Nay; I can't say. Anyhow the child's not here, it's dead, and she won't believe it."

"How old would it be?"

"About two years now, but it's been dead over a year; it was a boy."

"And who was the father?"

The woman looked keenly at Athelstane as she answered:

"I won't say a word more, sir; the poor man may have met with his death fairly, but most think otherwise."

"And who, in the name of horror, was he?"

"That I can't tell," the woman answered doggedly.

Athelstane proffered her another half sovereign but she drew back and refused it.

"If I was to tell half the secrets I know connected with this house," she said, "I should set half England by the ears. Nothing is what it seems to be nowdays. Nobody is good. Half the fine ladies—What am I saying? Ah! there's the bell. The missis is a ringing. Run out, sir, run out. She keeps a live fierce bear in a cage. She would as soon set it at you as look at you. She hates all men, so she will only have women doctors in this house."

Athelstane soon found himself outside again in the pouring rain watching the detested house with the most wrathful feelings. He paced up and down for an hour, and then he saw a cab drive up to the door. The driver descended and rang. The door fell back, and there emerged the veiled woman Clemence, surely Clemence, leaning on the arm of a tall and powerfully-built man whose face was masked!

They entered the cab and were driven rapidly off.

Athelstane strove to follow on foot in hopes that he might meet another cab, and by seeing the driver be enabled to follow the mysterious woman, and thus find out if she was put down at the house in Park Lane, but there was no other cab within hail, thus the tormentress escaped, for the cab was very soon out of sight.

"But I swear I will have it out with her tomorrow," he said to himself. "Nay, if she

will not satisfy me about all this I will give her up."

He had to walk a long way back to a station, and it was very late when he let himself in with his latch-key, ill, depressed and heartbroken, to the great house in Cavendish Square.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CLEMENCE'S HISTORY.

Fate was weaving a web for him,
Warp and woof, woe and war;
And the world was busy with noise and din
North and south, south and north.

Leontine arose betimes and set about the duties which fell to her lot. They were comparatively light ones. She was expected to be in the sleeping room of Lady Rodney at eight o'clock, and to read to that lady most of her correspondences, while she partook in bed of chocolate and toast.

Leontine read four or five unimportant letters aloud to Lady Rodney, and answered one or two at her dictation. Among them was one from their new neighbour in Yorkshire, Sir Peter Lingham, whose townhouse the Rodneys now occupied, making inquiries after the health of the family, especially that of Lady Rodney herself and poor Horace.

The baronet was at this time staying at the Langham, and he signified his intention of calling that afternoon, accompanied by an architect who was to make a plan for the improvement of the picture gallery, to be carried out the following autumn, when the Rodneys would have left, and Sir Peter purposed being again on the Continent.

It was very troublesome having that most tiresome old man here with his work people now that we are settled in the house."

Lady Rodney spoke with all the fretful impatience of an invalid.

"I have a very great mind," she added, after a pause, "that you shall write to him, Miss Melrose, in my name and tell him not to come."

To Leontine it was, of course, a matter of the most perfect indifference whether or no the said old baronet called. She had pen and notepaper ready, and was preparing to write when Eva burst into the room all bustle and energy, as was usually the case with this young lady.

"Old Sir Peter has written, Eva," cried Lady Rodney, "to say that he will be here this afternoon with the architect to take a plan for alterations in the picture gallery. I have a great mind to write and put him off."

"Don't," said Eva; "the old creature is a hideous monstrosity, no doubt, and as hard and wicked a wretch as walks the earth, but he always somehow has the entrée to all the best London houses. He will get me invited if I coax him to that ball at the Prime Minister's next Wednesday. I am dying to go, I shall meet there some of the royal family. I must have excitement now that I am away from my country duties or I will become insane. With all the invalid cares for you and poor Horace, and the solemn preparations for the marriage of Athelstane to that 'French doll,' there seems little prospect of my having anything to distract my mind from painful thoughts."

"Let him come, then," said Lady Rodney with a sigh of resignation.

So Leontine did not write to put old Sir Peter's visit off. Little did she dream what a strange effect on her destiny the not writing of that letter was to have.

Lady Rodney's own maid soon came to help her to dress, and Leontine accompanied Miss Rodney to a sumptuous breakfast room on the first floor, where they found Athelstane already awaiting them and the breakfast table laid with the dainties which fall to the lot of the rich.

Both these girls loved Athelstane Rodney, and both of them with the quick intuition of love knew and felt that he had some great grief and anxiety on his mind. It was not only his pallor, his restless eyes, his absent manner and irrelevant answers. There was an angry light in his eyes; he seemed as if struggling with

some pent up wrath, for every now and anon he clenched his hand as if it grasped the hilt of a sword.

Sometimes his eyes rested in a dreamy and half unconscious admiration on the graceful form and pure face of Leontine, and once their eyes met, and she detected a look which made her heart leap madly for a moment with a wild feeling akin to joy.

"He loves me!" said a voice in her heart; but she told herself it was a false voice, for she remembered the yellow hair and the black eyes of her cousin Clemence.

Athelstane kept saying to himself:

"I have been a madman in my love for yonder girl, but if I find that she is a shameless jade who has assumed the white robe of a saint, it will not cost me much to cast away the thought of her for ever. Good heavens! where were my eyes, and was my heart asleep during those weeks when I was first thrown into the way of Leontine, whose blue eyes have heavenly lights in them? Ah! what a sweet wife she will make some happy man some day, though she is poor and obscure and knows not if her father is of right a lord or baseborn!"

Eva stole out after her cousin into the hall, and followed him to a room where greatcoats hung. She sprang forward and offered to assist him.

"Thanks, dear Eva," he said, absently.

"Athelstane, you have heard something; you have found something out," she began; "you have heard that Clemence Melrose is the mother of a child?"

"Is that so?" he answered. "And do her parents know it, and hide it from me? Oh, Eva, I have hitherto refused to listen to your story, but now I wish to hear it. Something has happened to alter my opinion of Miss Melrose."

"Thank Heaven!" cried Eva, fervently. "I told you always that she was a wicked girl. Now listen. When Clemence Melrose was only seventeen she fell most madly in love with her dancing master, a fantastical and foolish and insolent young Frenchman called Charles Dapuis. She was cunning enough to carry on her wicked game unknown to her parents. She went down to her grandfather's seat, Melrose Court, in the county of Worcester, and the fellow followed.

"All he really thought of was to make her marry him, because then he was mad enough to think the Melrose folks would give him a few thousands, which was all he wanted, on condition of his taking his pretty doll wife away. Well, poor wretch, he had reckoned without his host; he did marry her, and the whole secret came out when she went out for a lonely ride one hot summer day, and was taken ill and went into a picturesque old farmhouse called the White Whitchard, where in a few hours her child, a boy, was born. By this time she had very much repented of her rash and foolish marriage. She took a violent hatred to the child, and refused doggedly to say who was its father. She was, of course, well known at the White Whitchard, for Mr. Reuben, the farmer, was a tenant of the old Earl of Hartbury.

"Mrs. Reuben sent for the nearest doctor, and who do you suppose that was? Why none other than Doctor Finucan, who was a stranger lodging in her own house. There must have been something shady about him also by the way, for he was poor, having, he said, sold his practice in the Scotch town of Dumfries about a year before and lost all the money he received in a speculation. Nobody in the county, in fact nobody in England, knew a word about him. This man attended to Clemence, and soothed her and promised to keep her secret, and fell in love with her in his turn as so many other people have done before and since.

"The first thing he did was to take the child clean away, and he placed it in a sort of charitable home at Camberwell, where it died. He wrote to Lady Melrose, who had heard nothing of this, for Clemence was only visiting under the care of her two governesses, one of whom was the poor thing whose lover, a Frenchman, afterwards murdered her at a party at Baywater. Well, they were of course frightened

when the young lady did not come back, and they were actually some days without finding out where Miss Melrose was, for the doctor would not let the Reubens communicate with anybody.

"Lady Melrose came to the farm and saw her wretched girl, and a firm friendship was at once struck up between the mother of Clemence and that inscrutable man the doctor, for then it was that he, as I have understood, undertook to assist the family to hide the disgrace of their girl, and yet in one sense it was not disgrace, for the fellow had really married the bold creature in some quiet city church where they were both unknown, and thus the miserable child whom the doctor had sent to the charitable home I mentioned to you was really and truly legitimate. I cannot tell you what presents the Melrose family made the Reuben family as hush money for that affair, but though Mrs. Reuben herself had acted as nurse, and, though she and a niece and a stupid country girl were the only women in the house, and the nearest neighbour lived a mile off, somehow the news did get about, and reached the ears of the woman servant who came with the Melrose family to Wolvermoor this winter. But you have yet to hear the worst part of the tale. The husband Dapuis was taken up on a false charge of being concerned in some robbery of plate; his rooms were searched, and some jewels that belonged to Lady Melrose were found in his box. No doubt, they had been placed there by the wretch Finucan, who called upon him after contriving to get the name and address of the husband to whom she was secretly united from Clemence.

"Dapuis was very poor, and he occupied a poor lodging in Greek Street, Soho. When he was arrested he went mad, raved, stormed, told the truth, was taken for a lunatic or a drunkard, was imprisoned, and found dead in his cell the next day. He had taken poison, so it was said. A post-mortem examination was held over his body, and it was buried by the parish, but the poor wretch had a brother. They say that brother is on the track of the Melrose family, and swears to be revenged.

"So now you know the history of your Clemence. She is the widow of a paltry French dancing master who died by poison in prison. She is the mother of a child, whom she allowed to be ruthlessly taken from her, and who died in a sort of pauper refuge for abandoned infants. This is the woman whom you intend to make your wife and the mother of your children. Is it so?"

To the surprise of Eva, the clouds had very gradually cleared away from the countenance of her cousin Athelstane while he listened to the story of the mad marriage of Clemence.

"After all, then," he said, "she was only a headstrong girl and is not an abandoned woman, and the man is dead, and the child is dead. Can you tell me how long it is since the child died?"

"It was three years old, I have heard, and it died last year."

"And," said Athelstane to himself, "she has been accustomed to go and see it at that Miss Crawley's, and only last night she heard it was dead. The tall, masked man I saw with her must have been Doctor Finucan. But how came he in the house? I suppose it was an appointment and he was there first?"

All these questions poor Athelstane asked and answered in his own heart, but to Eva he said simply:

"It is a sad—sad story, and I am grieved to think of the man her husband, and what he must have suffered before he took poison, but I think some of the things the woman said were falsehoods. I do not believe that the man had jewels placed in his box. Most likely he had stolen them, and then the Melrose family were actuated by vengeance to punish him severely, but I don't believe his death lies at their door. I will go now, Eva."

"Are you going to her?" Eva asked with pale lips, after hearing all my story. "Do you love her still?"

"Don't ask me, Eva," the young man answered softly. "I am pledged to marry her, and she loves me. She is a widow, but she is not a dis-

honourable woman. Yes, Eva, I am going to see her."

And Athelstane went out of the house and down the street looking very grave.

"I am afraid that at least some of this tale is true," he said to himself, gravely. "The story of the child at Camberwell tallies with what happened last night, but Clemence was only a foolish girl. There is really nothing wicked about her. It is my duty to fulfil my promise to marry her, and when she is once my wife she will be different. There will be no secrets between us. I will try and make her tell me the truth if I see her to-day. I will tell her that I saw her last night."

It was a miserable foggy, damp morning, but Athelstane walked all the way to the town-house of Lord Melrose, in Park Lane, and was shown at once into the library, where Lady Melrose was lounging on a couch engaged in some fancy work.

Athelstane was quite sure that there was a dark shade of anxiety on the fair face of his future mother-in-law. When she saw him enter she smiled, rose, pointed to a seat, and asked him in the most pleasant manner if he had breakfasted, and if Sir Robert had arrived in Cavendish Square. Athelstane answered all these questions politely, and then asked one in his turn:

"Where was Clemence?"

"Very ill, I am sorry to say, this morning," Lady Melrose answered. "She has a most violent bilious headache."

"Was she out last night?" the young man asked, a little anxiously.

The answer of Lady Melrose completely puzzled and mystified him; it was so cool, so calm, so perfectly free from embarrassment.

"Oh, dear no," she said; "the bilious attack came on last night soon after she arrived at home from Lady Rodney's, so she went to bed at once, and she has been ill ever since. It makes me very anxious; there is so much typhoid fever about, they tell me."

"Is this woman telling me truth or falsehoods?" Athelstane asked himself. "Then I cannot hope even to see Clemence for a moment to-day," he said, timidly, and added: "Did you know, Lady Melrose, that I am presumptuous enough to hope one day to make your beautiful daughter my wife?"

But how was it even as Athelstane spoke the words a sensation of something like horror came over him? Lady Melrose broke into a little strange artificial laugh, which chilled his blood in his veins.

"I have heard all about it, my dear Mr. Athelstane," she said, "and I am sure that you have the full and hearty consent both of Lord Melrose and myself. Poor dear Clemence has been a spoiled child, and has earned the reputation at the age of twenty-one of being a cruel coquette, but you see she is so very pretty that men have fallen in love with her without her knowing anything or caring anything about it, and some of these gentlemen, I fear, not liking the utter indifference with which she treated them, felt spiteful, and were mean enough to give her a far worse character for heartlessness than she deserves. For my own part I believe you will be very happy together."

Lady Melrose signed a short quick sigh, and then said, smiling:

"Perhaps to-morrow evening poor Clemence will be well enough to go to the ball at Lady Pearl Eversham's. They say it will be the greatest success of the season. Have you cards of invite?"

Athelstane shook his head.

"No," he said. "My brother, poor Horace, will arrive to-day or to-morrow. I do not expect to be able to get out much now in the gay world, Lady Melrose."

Soon after this Athelstane took leave of his intended mother-in-law, promising to call in the evening to inquire if his ladylove was better.

Horace Rodney had arrived. There had been great noise and fuss in the mansion. The

poor stricken invalid was quite senseless, and had to be carried upstairs on a kind of litter prepared for him. He was now in the room appointed for him. His mother had arrived from Bayswater, and was with him as well as his uncle Sir Robert, his brother Athelstane, and Lady Rodney and Eva.

Leontine sat quite alone in the little cosy drawing-room that was the favourite haunt of Lady Rodney. It was nearly dusk, her tea and a lamp were brought to her by a footman, and she was left solitary to take the meal or leave it untouched. There was no kind friend present to chide her for her want of appetite. She began very slowly to sip her tea, when a loud and thundering rap at the hall door startled her.

"The doctor, Sir Fulk," she decided, "come to see the invalid," and she thought no more of the arrival, for her mind was busy just then with her Bayswater home, and the privations which those she loved were enduring, for she had that evening received a letter from her father telling her of rent unpaid, and of all the poor furniture being in danger from a pitiless creditor and a bill of sale. The tears fell fast into her lap.

"If I only had a hundred pounds," she said to herself. At that precise moment there came a rap on the door of the room and two gentlemen entered.

(To be Continued.)

TO EARN A PALL.

"You have lost your daughter?" I heard one woman say to another who wore mourning.

"Yes, I've lost her," answered the poor mother. You see, she was always a delicate girl, and our only one, and we wanted her to stay at home. We had enough good food and shelter and nice plain clothes; but, poor girl, she wanted a velvet cloak and a satin dress and jewellery, and things we couldn't manage, and she went into a shop. It was winter time, and she was always in a draught, and it was a rule that they shouldn't wear shawls or jackets behind the counter. And then she got wet going, sometimes, when it rained, and stood all day with her things all damp. And once her boots were lost, and she got her feet soaked, and had to stay home with a cold. She got the velvet for her cloak, but we made a pall for her coffin. She was all we had. Life doesn't seem worth anything now to pa and me."

Ah, I thought, as the two passed out of hearing, that girl is not the only one whose velvet cloak has been her pall. Velvet and satin and pretty things of all sorts are very nice to have, but they are not worth health or life.

There was no harm in the girl's desire to earn for herself what her parents could not give her. Indeed, it is commendable to be independent; but where the constitution is so delicate that exposure to all those trials which "working for a living" must entail on any woman, is dangerous to health and life, and there is no stern necessity to drive her to it, finery is too dearly bought by such a risk. The body is more than raiment, and it is very like suicide to die for a velvet cloak and paste diamonds, or for anything which is not actually needed to support existence.

I have personally known three good girls who died for velvet cloaks. Two of them being already day teachers, took classes in night schools one bitter winter, for the express purpose of saving the money for such cloaks. Their relatives remonstrated with them; the family doctor advised them to relinquish the idea in vain. They died! And although I believe the poor mother has the cloaks folded away somewhere, none the less were they, in actual fact, their palls.

The other girl suffered agonies of alternate chill and roasting from a position between a red-hot register and a flapping outer door—that being where her employer desired his "lady

cashier" to take her place, that she might be dressed in satin and real lace upon her wedding day. It never came. Before the appointed time her grave was dug, and beside it her broken-hearted lover wept in vain.

Do you suppose the list ends here? Ah, no! Half the world is hard at work earning palls. The business men who break down in the counting-house where they toil for more wealth than they know what to do with; the professional man who kills himself in his pursuit of the bubble of popularity—in short, the name of those who are simply toiling to earn a pall is legion.—H. R.

THE FORCED MARRIAGE; —OR— JEW AND GENTILE.

CHAPTER X.

LATER in the day which followed the night so full of graphic incident, Rachael Aveling was surprised by a message from Mark Upton, begging the favour of an interview. The request was not a welcome one, for ever since her arrival at Ashurst it had been the young wife's wish to avoid all intercourse with this man, whom, for some inexplicable reason, she both disliked and distrusted. During the months which had lately passed she had not spoken with him, for her isolated life precluded all intercourse with the other members of the family.

Often, as she walked in her little garden in the early morning or evening, she was aware of his presence in the window above, and upon these occasions she never lifted her eyes, and being conscious that she was closely observed, she often found it more agreeable to shorten her exercise and return to her books and her music; and thus curtailing the keen enjoyment of being among her flowers in the bright, sweet sunlight.

Once or twice during these walks she had a dim knowledge that Upton strove to attract her attention, and at one time, as she thoughtlessly passed beneath his window, a slip of paper came fluttering down, and fell at her feet; but of this she took no notice, letting it remain where it fell, to be afterwards, as she observed, blown about hither and thither at the will of the wind.

So now, when word came from Upton, soliciting an interview, Rachael was tempted to refuse, yet when she examined the grounds of her distrust and dislike, she could find no tangible cause of complaint, and therefore, with great reluctance, consented.

"Shall I tell Mr. Upton that you will see him here, ma'am?"

"By no means," the young girl replied. "I will reveal you to some other portion of the house—to the drawing-room, or to the reception-room."

The man held the door open for his mistress to pass. She turned as she crossed the threshold and called Pluto to accompany her.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said the servant. "These are the only rooms that Pluto is ever allowed to enter. The housekeeper would be very much put out if she knew he set foot in other parts of the house."

Rachael raised her head with spirit to resent the man's interference with what she considered her own privileges, but instantly reflecting that "the play was not worth the candle," she sent the dog back to his place.

Her conductor led her through the same range of corridors, vestibules, and apartments which she had traversed so many months before, and at last ushered her into the morning room where she once waited so long and so anxiously for her uncle's return.

As she crossed the threshold of this room, now revisited for the first time since that early

summer morning, more than a year ago, the same sad, almost despairing mood stole over her. She seemed to hear the echo of her husband's harsh words; she seemed still to see his glance of repugnance and dislike; her heart sank as these recollections stole over her, and losing that freedom of manner which her recent mode of life had encouraged, she fell back into her old-time restraint and self-appreciation.

Again she seemed to come under the daily surveillance of Levy's harsh eye: every instant she expected to hear some stern command which she could not obey, and that dreadful uncertainty as to what the next hour had in store for her again possessed her mind.

She wished herself back in her own lowly rooms, which, if solitary and almost prison-like, were at least free from such tormenting fancies as she experienced here. She had even risen to fly to that more peaceful retreat, when the door opened noiselessly and Mark Upton stood before her.

"Ah! my dear cousin," he said, advancing toward her with a manner of great cordiality, "I very much fear that I have exhausted your patience by my delay. I see you were about returning to your own rooms, thinking I had forgotten our appointment."

Rachael, so depressed and constrained a moment before, was somehow suddenly aroused by Upton's manner, for, coldly returning his salute, she replied:

"I beg you to remember, Mr. Upton, that this interview is not one of my appointment. I hope it may be brief, for I wish to return to my own rooms."

He took a chair near the one where Rachael had now seated herself.

"I found it absolutely necessary to break in upon your solitary life," he replied. "Your husband's strange conduct left me no other choice. I regret the necessity, but—"

"Then why do you not spare yourself any such regret?" interrupted Rachael. "It is well known to you that my husband and I have very little in common. His movements are not regulated or defined by me, so why should I now be made acquainted with anything concerning him?"

"For a very important reason," replied Upton, very decidedly. "I am strongly of the opinion that your husband has run away, leaving no hint of his intentions, no trace of his whereabouts."

Rachael's cheek glowed rather than paled at this announcement. An unloved wife flushes with chagrin and shame at a husband's neglect and cruelty, while one beloved, grieved and sorrowful, grows pale and faint at the first hint of waning affection.

"Run away!" she echoed. "Could he no longer endure to breathe the air which my presence tainted?"

"Alas!" returned Upton, throwing a tone of deep sympathy into his voice. "Let us not be too harsh in our judgments. There is some mystery connected with his sudden departure. Late last evening he returned from a journey to the North, and when I met him at dinner he seemed pleased to be again at Ashurst for the sake of the rest which he said he sorely needed. We discussed various matters connected with the estate, all in the friendliest possible spirit, for, of late, your husband has seemed to relinquish the sad and unfounded prejudices which he once harboured against me. As I was saying, we discussed many subjects of common interest, and I gathered from all he said that he should spend the winter here, and so you may judge of my surprise when this note was put into my hands this morning."

Upton handed a folded paper to Rachael, who took it mechanically and read its contents. It was short, hastily scrawled rather than written, and read as follows:

"SUNDAY and most urgent business calls me away. I have no time to see you. Cannot tell when I shall write or return."

The initials "E. A." were signed to the hurried missive. Rachael returned it to Upton with

an unshaken hand. Edward Aveling had not been such a husband to her that she should feel any alarm at his sudden and unexplained departure. Beyond the fact that she might be the innocent cause of his leaving, she felt no real interest in the matter.

"Do you think that I have driven him away?" she asked. "Is it possible that some sudden accession of dislike toward me made him quit Ashurst so precipitately?"

"I think not," replied Upton, yet he eyed his companion closely for a few moments; then abruptly said: "There were strange proceedings in this house last night, which, could they be explained, would without doubt furnish the clue to Aveling's mysterious absence. Do you know anything about what I refer to?"

Rachael looked up and met Upton's searching glance fixed upon her face. His words, his questioning regard, the remembrance of last night's vigil, perplexed and confused her.

"I—I do not know what you mean," she stammered, a sudden, exasperating glow overspreading her face.

She dropped her eyes, yet, at the same time, she was vexed with herself for doing so, and thereat her face grew still more flushed. She therefore struggled to regain her composure, and after a few seconds, during which she felt that Upton was still studying her countenance, she continued:

"Thomas told me this morning that some of the servants fancied they heard unusual noises about the house last night, but I paid little or no attention to what he said. Perhaps you had better question him."

The young girl intended no prevarication or falsehood when she made this reply. Had her position in that house been a different one she would unhesitatingly have related her strange experience of the night before; but her life was so hemmed in by limitations and restraints; she was the object of so many adverse wishes; she felt so keenly the need of holding aloof from all disturbing influences; and, more than all else, she distrusted Mark Upton so thoroughly, that she dared not establish between them even so faint a bond of sympathy as the relation of her recent adventure.

"I have questioned the servants," Upton answered, after a long, and to Rachael, a most painful pause. "I have questioned them, but I think more could be elicited from another source."

He waited as if expecting his companion to reply, but as she remained silent he went on in a monotonous yet significant tone:

"I was not feeling well last evening. The weather, I think, must have had influence upon my spirits; so, after dining with my cousin and hearing his plans for the winter, I went to my room to think them over a bit. Contrary to my habit, I did not order lights, but sat at my window looking absently out upon the wild, stormy night.

"By the way," Upton continued, speaking with a little more animation, as if a sudden thought had struck him—"by the way, is it not strange how a little light—even that from an open fire—will illuminate the darkness outside an uncurtained window? My head ached fearfully last night, so, after a time, I threw up my window and leaned out to let some of the cool rain beat upon my forehead, thinking I might in that way ease the pain a little, and what do you think I saw when I did so?"

He paused, and Rachael, suddenly chilled by a nervousness which she could not control, replied:

"It is difficult, perhaps, to tell."

"Would you like to know?"

"It is a matter of indifference to me."

"I will tell you, nevertheless," Upton replied. I saw a woman standing outside one of the lower windows, looking in. The ruddy glow from an open fire lighted up her figure so I could see she was tall, angular, poorly dressed, old, wet and cold. She seemed to be signalling to someone inside, and, after awhile, the window was opened, the woman disappeared, and the curtain was drawn—at least I judged so, for the light was no longer to be seen. Do you not think that

was a strange sight to see in such a quiet place as Ashurst on a stormy November night?"

Rachael was strangely excited by Upton's words—more, perhaps, by his significant manner and tone than by what he said. The effect of his manner, of his presence, was to produce that tense action of the nerves, that exalted state of apprehension which, to a delicate, sensitive organisation, is alarming, and, at times, almost paralysing.

Months, nay, years before, when she used to see this man at her uncle's rooms, she dreaded to meet his eye. She would often escape from his presence, so baleful an influence did he appear to possess; and, as she grew older, she seemed to be taught, as if by instinct, to avoid him still more. Waiting for a reply which did not come, Upton again demanded:

"Say, do you not think that was a strange sight to see in such a quiet place as Ashurst on a stormy November evening?"

Surely knowing what to reply, Rachael roused herself at length, and said:

"Surely eyes which can pierce darkness and defy storms should also be able to wrest secrets from walls of brick and mortar."

"Ah, not the eyes alone have that power," was Upton's quick reply. "Other senses must be brought into action—the hearing, for instance. Keen eyesight is often matched with acute hearing."

"For that one may be truly thankful," responded Rachael, raising her eyes and steadily returning Upton's penetrating gaze. "In such cases the ears may be able to refute and disprove the unrighteous inferences of the eyes."

"Do you think so?" he asked, smiling sardonically. "Do you really think so, ma cousin? I wish I could always agree with you, as I certainly am strongly inclined to do; but there are some things in which I think we must agree to disagree. In this matter of the senses, now, I think the ears often confirm the conclusions which the other senses draw. Especially so when secret conferences, strange visitants, and appointments on dark, stormy nights are concerned."

"Mr. Upton, I do not understand your dark insinuations!" replied Rachael, roused from her apathy by her companion's unpleasant words and demeanour. "If you say you beheld a poor, wandering maniac come to my room last night and beg for admittance to the warmth of my fire, you saw all there was to see, or to found unjust suspicion upon. The poor creature was benumbed with the cold, was wandering in mind, thinly clad and suffering.

"I do not know how she chanced to stand beneath my window, neither do I know, for I am not versed in the ways of this house, by what means she left the place. I waited all night, expecting and dreading the poor wretched creature's return. I dared not alarm the house, for she threatened my life when twice I made the attempt. I knew there were servants about all hours of the day and night, so I thought no mischief would result if I did not give the alarm."

Rachael spoke rapidly, excitedly, in her own defence, and after she ceased she arose to leave the room. But Mark Upton detained her.

"Yours is a very ingenious vindication, but it has many improbable points," he said. "If you will take the advice of one who really wishes to befriend you, you will take me entirely into your confidence. I am not a man to betray such sacred trusts. You may rely upon my fidelity and discretion as securely as though I were your father or brother."

But instead of accepting this uncalled-for offer Rachael looked at the speaker with disdainful surprise.

"Do you doubt my truth?" she demanded. "Do you think I am deceiving or misleading you? If so you may remain of that opinion, for I will never debase myself by justifying what I have said!"

"Madame," said Upton, in a warning voice. "It is best that you should have a care how you speak and act in this house. You are young and inexperienced and cannot know what perils may beset your path. You must not

fancy because the time you have already passed here has gone quietly over your head that the future will bring you no disquietude. These seemingly peaceful months have not been passed in idleness by others, and let me tell you, you will soon find this out. I speak strongly, perhaps harshly, but it is because I am fully awake to the perils of your situation, although you seem to be blind to them. I came this morning to give you a friendly caution and to solicit that confidence which is your only safeguard. If you choose to withhold it and to slight my warning words, I cannot avert the consequences, but shall never cease to deplore your infatuation."

"Such dark surmises as yours are best unfathomed," replied Rachael, with dignity. "My life here, though solitary, has been open and upright. I scorn the base suspicions you have uttered. I fear no inquiry into either my thoughts or my actions, but it strikes me that you are scarcely the person whose duty or privilege it is to call me to any account whatever."

Mark Upton bit his lips in chagrin and looked at the girl before him in amazement. Was this spirited young creature standing before him with such dignity and grace the same characterless child who had been such a tool in the hands of Levy and himself but a short year before?

"Madame," he at length said, recovering from his surprise, and again assuming a warning tone, "you seem strangely forgetful of your peculiar position."

"You are wrong," she quickly replied. "Not for an hour does it escape my memory, sir."

"Then, if such is the case, you must be aware that so singular a position entails grave and peculiar possibilities."

"Without doubt," she assented. "I am prepared for those possibilities, whatever guise they may appear in. An innocent person never loses courage."

"Strange, strange infatuation!" murmured Upton, as if communing with himself. "Immersed in her lonely rooms, she has no suspicion that day by day dangers have been gathering around her which she cannot escape unless she grasps the friendly hand which is outstretched to rescue her? Will you not trust me?" he again asked, raising his voice, and speaking in the tone of one who makes an earnest, passionate appeal.

"I will trust no one in this house so long as I remain here as Edward Aveling's wife," she firmly replied. "If my husband desires not my confidence it shall be given to no one else."

"Ah!" he said, quickly. "Do I understand from your words that away from this house you would speak more freely?"

"Mr. Upton!" the girl cried, throwing back her head and gazing scornfully upon her questioner, "I am wholly at a loss to understand your meaning. Your words and manner are equally offensive, and I regret having come where I should be subjected to them. I repeat, that as long as I remain Edward Aveling's wife he alone has the right to any confidences which I might have to make. If he should not claim them, as, indeed, I do not expect, I remain my own confidante."

"Then you will not reveal the secret of your husband's absence?" Upton cried, looking searchingly into the girl's face.

"The secret of my husband's absence?" she repeated, returning his gaze with one of undisguised astonishment. "Are your senses leaving you? I know nothing of my husband or of his absence."

"Take care, madame!" said Upton again. "Remember it is no slight thing for one like you to tamper with the movements of a man like Aveling, even if he is your husband! The fact that he is your husband—that you and he are at variance—makes the matter all the worse for you. Remember that a strange visitor was seen to enter your room last night. You had a long and secret conference together. Your dog, usually so fierce and intractable

towards strangers, made no noise; he was kept quiet by yourself, as he would not have been had the alarm which you claim to have felt been genuine. Your strange visitor did not leave your apartments by the way she came, but, upon your own admission, went through other portions of the house. Last night your husband declared his intention of remaining for the winter at Ashurst. This morning he is missing, and this hastily-written, ambiguous note is the only trace he leaves behind him. You and your unknown visitor have had some hand in Aveling's disappearance, and I tell you again, it behoves you to take someone into your confidence who can befriend you should any unpleasant investigation take place. I have offered you my aid. I repeat the offer. I—"

"Stop!" Rachael cried. "Do not utter another base insinuation concerning me! I have already listened to you too long. Were my husband here I would go to him and beg the only favour in his power to bestow upon me, and that is that I may be removed to some place where the evil tongue of slander will not assail me. Rest assured, Mr. Upton, I shall seek an interview with him as soon as he returns to Ashurst. I shall acquaint him with your persecutions, and if he has any humanity he will protect me from them."

"You do well to say that you will wait until his return," responded Upton. "That time, I believe, will be far distant. Yet we will neither of us despair, for an investigation will reveal much."

Rachael did not wait to hear Upton's last words. She left the room ere he had finished speaking, and with all the speed of which she was capable fled toward her own apartments, whose friendly shelter she heartily wished she had not left. Mark Upton stood for some moments after her departure gazing fixedly at the door through which she had passed.

"The jade is deeper than I thought," he murmured. "In spite of her professed innocence I believe she knows more about last night's affair than she acknowledges. I put a strong face upon the matter to frighten her, but I thereby only uttered what may yet prove to be true. It is certain that Aveling has run away, and I am equally certain that the woman who stole into his wife's room and had that lonely conference with her last night has something to do with it."

"It is not in human nature to for ever endure the slights which have been put upon the little Jewess, and if she has a tinge of old Levy's spirit and shrewdness she would naturally find some way to avenge herself. I wish I had been less of a coward last night! I ought to have followed up the clue I got when I leaned out of my chamber window, but like an idiot I lay waiting for the woman to go the way she came, and thus lost a golden opportunity. Little do I care whether Aveling ever returns. It is enough for the present that in his absence I am master of Ashurst. Chance may yet turn affairs to my infinite advantage."

Thus musing, Mark Upton continued standing upon the spot where Rachael left him, until some moments later when one of those seemingly irrelevant impulses prompted him to open the door and go forth into the same corridor by which the girl had made her escape.

CHAPTER XI.

WITH the echo of Mark Upton's voice ringing in her ears, Rachael Aveling flew from his presence and turned to seek her own apartments, but in her excitement she mistook their direction, and wandering into another part of the house had gone some distance before she discovered her mistake. Then, bewildered and impatient, she endeavoured to retrace her way, and had, indeed, almost reached the door of the morning room, from which she started, and was about hastening in the right direction when, to her infinite chagrin, she saw the door of that apartment open and Mark Upton come forth.

Made nervous and weak by her interview with

the man, she dreaded meeting him again; so to avoid a rencontre, she drew back and retreated lest he should observe her. She hoped thus to escape his notice, but to her dismay she heard his footsteps coming in the same direction, only a turn in the hall separating them. Made still more nervous by this imminent meeting, feeling that the suspicious mind of Upton would place a wrong construction upon her presence in that forbidden portion of the building, Rachael at last fairly fled from before the face of her enemy.

A flight of stairs seemed to offer a timely service, and up these she lightly and noiselessly ran. Yet as she turned her head for an instant on the upper landing she again beheld Upton, who, still unconscious of her vicinity, also turned to ascend. Feeling more and more averse to being seen by her tormentor as moment after moment passed, Rachael stood in the upper corridor for a moment irresolute. Then, driven onward by those advancing footsteps, she again sped down a lateral passage which she hoped might communicate with a back staircase, and thus chancing to meet a servant, she would ask the way to her own rooms.

But she seemed to be still pursued by Upton, who, all unconscious of her presence, followed close upon her track. The girl's flight had now assumed all the excitement of a romantic pursuit, and certainly never did heroine flying from banditti experience greater terror than did this poor young wife as in her own husband's house she fled before the man of whom she stood in such mortal yet scarcely accountable dread.

At last a sudden resolution seized her. She would secrete herself in one of the many rooms which she passed until Upton had gone on his way, then she could easily make her escape without the observation of anyone.

She wondered at her own folly in finding herself so nervous and cowardly. She did not reflect that her last night's watching, with its previous fright, as well as the exciting interview of the morning, might well have unnerved a timid, solitary girl.

She turned and laid her hand upon the knob of a door. At first it resisted her effort to open it. She gave it a desperate, strong push, for in a second more Upton would have her full in view. The door opened, she slipped in, closed and locked it behind her, and then listening breathlessly, she was intensely relieved to hear her pursuer quietly pass, and immediately afterwards another door open and shut as if he had now himself gained his own apartment.

With a sigh of relief she was about unlocking the door beside which she stood to steal forth as noiselessly as she had come, when something caused her to turn her head, doing which she was transfixed with astonishment to see her husband standing in the middle of the room gazing at her with no less astonishment, but angry and excited as well.

For a moment the young girl was wholly at a loss what to do. She stood looking at the pale, haggard face of her husband with open-eyed wonder and fear, for his countenance wore an expression which alarmed her beyond description.

She could scarcely have been more dismayed had he risen from the dead, for had she not been repeatedly told that morning that the master of Ashurst had gone away? It was Aveling who first broke the painful silence.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" he angrily asked. "Did I not especially command you never to enter these rooms?"

With a vivid flush Rachael cast her eye over the room, and discovered that she had unwittingly invaded her husband's own apartments.

"I humbly beg your pardon," she murmured. "I had no intention of disobeying your commands, or of intruding here, but still I thank a kind Providence which has brought me to your presence, for it is my duty to tell you what persecutions I suffer beneath your roof. Your cousin, Mr. Upton, accuses me of conspiring against you. He torments me with offers of friendship which I distrust and repudiate. I fled from the interview he begged of me this

morning, but in this great house I mistook my way to my own rooms. I heard his footsteps behind me, so I nervously ran on until this room seemed to offer a refuge and a way of escape. I solemnly declare I did not know you were here, or that these were your apartments. I am nervous and frightened, and I beg you will either send me to some other place, or else forbid Mr. Upton ever again speaking with me."

She spoke rapidly, excitedly, and with more animation than Aveling had believed she possessed; yet his mind was intent on other matters, so he paid but little heed to her words or her manner.

"He told me you had gone away and would not return," the girl went on, breathlessly. "He accused me of planning some scheme against you. He saw a poor, wretched maniac come to my window and beg to warm herself awhile by my fire, and so he—"

Aveling interrupted her by seizing her roughly by the arm.

"Did you see that creature?" he demanded, in a hollow voice, his flaming eyes and the quivering muscles of his face making his countenance a terrible picture to look upon.

"I did," replied Rachael, shrinking back with a new terror.

"Did she speak with you?"

"Yes."

"What did she say? Answer! Attempt no falsehood or evasion. What did she say to you?"

"Indeed, sir, nothing that I can remember. She seemed hopelessly wandering in her mind. I wished to ring for help, because I feared her, but she threatened my life if I so much as touched the bell."

"For that I thank her," muttered Aveling, below his breath. Then shaking the girl's arm more roughly than in his excitement he was aware, he again demanded:

"Answer! What did she tell you? for I do not believe she saw you without saying something to you."

"No," said Rachael. "She seemed much too absorbed in her own fanciful mutterings to pay much heed to me. I did wrong to open the window to admit her, but she looked so sold, so wretched, and so threatening, that I both pitied and feared her. She was quiet and peaceable at first, but afterwards she showed me a scrap of paper, which, for some reason, seemed greatly to excite her."

"What was the scrap of paper?"

"It was the announcement of our marriage."

"Ah! I thought as much," replied Aveling, throwing off the girl's arm, and taking two or three rapid strides about the room.

Rachael, now released, would have left the apartment, feeling that this was no place and no time to urge the request she had already preferred; but before she opened the door her husband again spoke.

"Did you tell me a moment ago that Upton said I had left Ashurst?"

"Yes," the girl replied, trembling still as she looked into the pale, haggard face of the questioner and noted his bloodshot eyes and dishevelled hair.

"Then the note I sent him and the resolution I took would have been successful if I had only carried them out," he said, speaking as if communing with himself alone. "Why did I return after once having got safely off? Why was I beguiled with that other purpose, which may not prove so feasible? Oh! a man does indeed lay hold upon death when he so entangles his life with sin that he sees no escape! Of what use have been my efforts to reform?" he continued, pacing up and down the room, while a frightful sneer curled his lips. "A man never knows how deep the slough of guilt may be in which he has snared himself until he turns to make his way out of it. It is terrible for one so young as I to be driven from the world by my own follies. Retribution—retribution—must be exacted for every offence against God and man; and this retribution may not be made as man wills. He cannot so control the consequences of his own evil acts that they will not start up

and paralyse him when he thinks he is making his best efforts to regain his lost innocence. Oh! I was an idiot! when I thought I could wipe out the past."

He struck his forehead violently with his clenched hand, and Rachael, who looked on affrighted and perplexed, thought that her husband's mind was wandering in the same realms of perturbed fancy as that of her last night's visitor.

"I have wronged you also," Aveling continued, resuming his melancholy, despairing monologue, as again he took up his position before his young wife. "It is right that I should make you some reparation, but that cannot be done by the flight I anticipated. I have done well, after all, to return, for a surer, safer way out of my difficulties awaits me here."

Rachael still looked wonderingly upon the speaker, half thinking herself in a dream from which she would soon awake to find this young man the same assured, haughty, self-confident person whom she had last seen, while the present excited, despairing apparition would vanish like a midnight vagary.

She found herself wondering why he had left Ahurst that morning, why he had written that short, hurried note announcing his determination to remain away, and why he had afterwards returned as secretly as he went, for she was convinced that no one save herself knew of his arrival.

She thought of the strange woman who visited her last night. Had she in her wanderings about the house chanced upon these rooms also, and had her sudden appearance so startled and terrified this young man that his nerves were thereby unsettled?

What should she do? Once before during the last twenty-four hours she had erred in not summoning help; she would not again commit that mistake; she would ring the bell as loud as she could; she would order a physician summoned; she would—

Strange fatality that these resolves were so tardy; strange that her hand had not touched the bell a moment—*a second, sooner!* She had just reached out her hand to seize it when a sharp, deafening report sounded in her ears. She turned her head quickly, just in time to see her husband fall to the floor with a ghastly, blackened mark upon his forehead.

With a scream she darted forward, scarcely knowing what she did. She leaned over the prostrate form. She seized a pistol which the senseless man still grasped in his hand, and then, with her fingers clenched close upon the murderous weapon, she dashed to the door, flung it open, and rushed forth speechless with horror, her tongue cleaving to the roof of her mouth, and incapable of uttering the shrieks which her icy lips seemed to freeze into silence.

It seemed only an instant ere she reached the hall outside that chamber door, yet the household was already alarmed; and running wildly forth, with the pistol still in her hand, Rachael Aveling fell prone at the feet of Mark Upton, who, roused by the report, was hurrying to ascertain its cause.

Thomas, Mr. Aveling's man, the housekeeper, and other members of the family were also there; but in their excitement they none of them paused to raise the prostrate girl. They ran past her into the chamber beyond, and there upon the floor they beheld the same ghastly spectacle which had paralysed the young Jewess. Thomas, the oldest domestic in the house, was the first to kneel at his master's side. He thrust his hand into the bosom of his dress.

"He still breathes," he cried. "Help me lift him, and someone go instantly for a physician."

The housekeeper and Upton obeying this command, assisted in lifting the bleeding Aveling to a couch, and then Thomas himself flew to the stables, and without waiting to saddle the fleet horse which he rode dashed off in quest of a physician.

It would be difficult to define the feelings o-

Mark Upton as, awaiting the arrival of a medical man, he sat beside his senseless cousin, staunching the blood which flowed from his wound, and alternately assisting and directing the housekeeper in those restorative efforts which proved so fruitless. His had been the only eye which, as he rushed into the room, noted the weapon in the hand of the prostrate Jewess. What did this tragedy mean? What was the true interpretation of the various events which had transpired in that house since the previous evening?

Once Mark Upton stole for a moment from the wounded man's side and looked out into the corridor where he had seen the Jewess fall. She was gone, but whether borne away by servants or not he could not tell. The moments, which seemed like hours, passed heavily away, and at length the sound of carriage wheels was heard without. A moment later footsteps echoed through the house, the door was hastily opened, and Thomas appeared, ushering in the physician.

"What is this?" the latter said, hastening to the bedside and examining the senseless man. "What! Is this a suicide?"

"A suicide or something worse," whispered Upton; "what is your opinion as to the result? You see he still breathes."

"I see," replied the doctor, examining the pulse and the wounded forehead of the patient. "I see, but such a wound as that is no trifling matter."

He ordered more light admitted to the chamber, then, drawing forth some bright surgical instruments, and commanding the assistance of Upton, did what his professional skill dictated to ascertain the nature of the wound. He shook his head when he had finished.

"It is a bad job," he said; "but where there's life there's hope, and there is something upon which to hang a thread of hope. The ball has not penetrated as far as I feared, but the injury is so serious it may easily prove fatal. We must first extract the ball, and then proceed to do what we can to repair the mischief. Strange! strange!" he muttered, as he proceeded with his ghastly task. "Strange, indeed, that a young man like this should attempt self-destruction."

"Do you really think it a case of suicide?" asked Upton, in a whisper.

"Without a doubt. Such a wound as that is commonly produced by the sufferer's own hand. Unless some contradictory evidence were adduced, I should decidedly say it was an attempt at self-destruction. Do you know how it happened?"

"I do not, sir. I can only surmise the facts."

"And just now we have no time for surmises," returned the surgeon, briefly, as he skilfully and, during the remainder of the time, silently performed his delicate duty.

Edward Aveling lived, yet that was all, and no one could tell how soon the faint spark of life which lingered might go out in darkness and death. The surgeon departed, leaving with the housekeeper and Upton such orders as the necessity of the case demanded. An active, bustling little man, who cared less for causes than effects, he did not tarry to investigate the circumstances which led to the tragedy; such occurrences were common in his experience, and he usually left investigations to the family, the coroner, and the lawyers.

"I'll look in again in an hour," he said, as he took leave. "If you desire I will spend the night here, so as to be on hand should anything unfavourable arise."

Upton nodded acquiescence, and then returned to his post by the side of the sufferer, who, lying back upon his blood-stained pillow, pallid, motionless, unconscious, looked more like a ghastly corpse than a living being.

"You can do nothing beyond what I have ordered," the surgeon said, looking back into the room as he was about closing the door behind him. "Watch him every instant, give the medicines I have left, and wet the bandages on his head from time to time until I return. Nothing more can be done at present."

He left the sick chamber and made his way downstairs.

"It's a terrible affair, sir," said the servant who held his horse at the door.

"Terrible? Yes, all such deeds are terrible," responded the physician, as he paused before getting into his carriage.

"Is he dead, sir?"

"No, my man, he's not dead yet; but I don't promise much for him."

The doctor suddenly felt his arm clutched from behind, and turning round, beheld a horror-stricken face, the eyes wide open with a questioning stare, and lips parted with an effort to speak. It was a young girl, pale, breathless, and horrified.

"Will he die?" she gasped.

"Well, my child, I hope not," the surgeon answered kindly, for the girl's extreme alarm moved him to pity. "I think we may safely hope that he will pull through this time, but it will be a pretty close shave."

The girl fell back and ran rapidly up the steps down which she had flown an instant before.

"What girl is that?" asked the doctor, turning to the servant.

"It is Mrs. Aveling, sir."

"The young gentleman's wife?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, his wife," he assented. "But I guess there ain't much love betwixt the two."

"She's a foreigner, is she not?"

"A Jewess, sir."

"She's young to have such a trial. She doesn't look to be nineteen yet."

"Just turned seventeen, they say, sir."

The physician took the reins from the man's hand and drove away, while the servant, dazed as people often are by catastrophes, stood looking blankly after the departing vehicle. He was aroused by a voice from the open door behind him.

"Go to Mr. Upton and ask if I may not also watch beside Mr. Aveling."

"It was the young wife who spoke, and whom the man reluctantly obeyed.

With a stony stare, her eyes fixed upon the ground, yet seeing nothing save the horrible vision which she feared would never be effaced from her sight, the girl awaited the domestic's return.

She waited long, longer than in her perturbed state of mind she was aware, but at last Upton's voice called her, and following his beckoning hand she went with him into the empty, desolate drawing-room. He closed the door behind them and motioned her to a seat.

LETTERS *STORY*

(To be Continued.)

HERE is an idea for Mr. Buckmaster. At a fair soon to be held at Athens, Georgia, there will be a cooking match between three young ladies on two different sides, the sides to cook on different days; both sides are to cook the same "bill of fare," and serve the meal for newspaper men, who will act as referees.

THE Prince of Wales, a large exhibitor at the Norfolk Fat Cattle Show, took the first prize in the shorthorn heifer class, the first prize in the red polled steer class, and the first prize in the Southdown wether class.

MR. JENKINS, M.P. for Dundee, has given notice that upon the opening of Parliament he will bring forward a motion respecting the competency of the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief. We have no doubt that the author of Ginx's Baby will be reminded by General Shute, Sir Charles Russell, V.C., and other distinguished officers, that the duke was the first to volunteer his services when the Crimean war was declared.

WHEN the Mediterranean fleet proceeded recently to Cyprus, the ironclads entered the harbour of Famagusta two abreast, and found in its waters ample room for all the ships and many more. Admiral Hornby reported that the harbour was superior to Valetta.



[AN ARISTOCRAT.]

A STORY OF THE FRENCH "COMMUNE."

CHAPTER I.

It was the spring of 1871. The second siege of Paris had ended, the Commune had fallen, and the troops of Thiers, at last, were in full possession of the city. People who had fled from the mad slaughter, inaugurated by the insurgents, were everywhere returning to their homes.

The arrests of the women, who had fired houses with petroleum, the *Petroleuse*, as they were called, and of others outlawed by similar crimes, still went on. Not a day passed, but hundreds of these misguided offenders, caught, often red-handed, were deported to Cayenne. Short and speedy was the trial; often there was no trial at all.

Sometimes even innocent persons found in suspected localities, shared the punishment of the guilty; for conqueror and conquerors alike were, for the moment, crazed to madness by the horrors of that hideous tragedy.

On a bright day, early in the morning, and quite soon after the siege was over, a plain brougham, drawn by one horse, drove rapidly in the direction of Belleville. At the corner of one of the principal streets, it drew up, and a woman, plainly attired, and closely veiled, alighted.

"Wait for me here, Pierre," she said to the coachman. "If you were to go further, you might attract attention, which, in the present excited state of the people here, might lead to trouble. I can easily find the place."

The coachman shook his head, deprecatingly. He was an old family servant, who had known his present mistress from a child; besides, French servants are allowed a familiarity denied to English ones. He did not hesitate, therefore, to remonstrate.

"But is there no danger?" he said. "Suppose your rank is discovered—"

"There is no risk whatever," answered his mistress, interrupting him. "I am effectually disguised. No person I am likely to meet here would take me for a hated aristocrat. And I must find my dear old foster-mother, who is starving with her daughter, I fear, in some one of these alleys."

The Marquise de Villery, at twenty-four, had had three years a widow. Born of an ancient but impoverished family, she had been married at eighteen to a wealthy marquis, old enough to be her father.

Generally in France these marriages de convenance are submitted to without a murmur; every girl, above the rank of a tradesman's daughter, expects them as a matter of course. Moreover, until her betrothal at least, she is mostly kept in a convent; sees nothing of the other sex outside of her own family; and has it impressed on her, from her earliest years, that this is the only proper method of forming a matrimonial alliance.

Love, she is told, is immodest, until she becomes a wife. Her parents, it is inculcated on her, are the only suitable persons to select a husband for her. For a girl, thus educated, to wed, without affection, is quite a different thing from what it would be in the case of an English one.

Irene La Roche, for such was her maiden name, married, as she was told, and as she believed it to be her duty; but hers was one of the cases in which the marriage was entered on with a heavy loss. For Irene had not been brought up in the seclusion of a convent, but in her father's old chateau in Brittany, her uncle, the abbé, being her principal instructor.

She had for her fellow-student and playmate from childhood, her second cousin, the Vicomte Carnac. It is true that, after awhile, Henri went into the army; but his vacations were always spent at the chateau; for he was an orphan, and had no nearer relatives than the La Roches. Without being aware of it, the two young people fell in love.

It was only when the marriage, which had been arranged for her, was announced to Irene, that she discovered the truth. Educated as she had been, she sank from the discovery as from a crime; and though she submitted, suffered none the less.

If the vicomte had been at home, he would have saved her, for he nearly went mad with grief and despair when he heard the news; but he was absent in Algiers with his regiment, and only received intelligence of the marriage when it was too late.

Fortunately, the old marquis did not live long. When Irene was twenty-one he died, leaving no children. One of his last acts was to bequeath to his widow all the property, which was considerable, under his control.

Perhaps he had at last begun to suspect the truth, and as an honourable man, wished to indemnify her as far as he could for what she had suffered.

"You have been very good to me, my child," were almost his last words, as he held her hand in his, "and have made the last years of an old man happy. God bless you, and send you a brighter lot, and—good-bye!"

"And so he died, chivalric to the last, like his far-away, Crusading ancestor, who had fallen at Damietta, when Saint Louis had to yield himself prisoner to the infidel.

The reader will guess the sequel. The cousins met again; the old intimacy was renewed; and they knew their hearts by this time. It was arranged that at the end of two years' mourning they should be married.

But just as that period was about to expire, war was declared with Germany, and Henri was ordered, with his regiment, to the frontier. Then followed the siege of Paris by the Prussians; its surrender; the rising of the Commune; the second siege; and the capture of the city by the troops of Thiers.

During these terrible months, Irene had seen Henri only twice, the last time being just before the second fall of Paris. It had then been arranged that the marriage should occur soon after the city was taken.

The vicomte, meantime, had resigned from the army in order to be elected a member of the legislature.

"I can be of more service to my country now as deputy than as a soldier," he said; and accordingly he had gone down to Brittany to secure a seat in the place of one vacated by the death of a member.

The marquise, meantime, took up her residence in her hotel, in the Rue St. Honore, and began preparations for the wedding. Then it was that she bethought her to inquire after her foster-sister, who had become a modiste, and whom she now heard was starving somewhere in Belleville.

"I will seek her out," she said, "and give her work; poor Marie, and the dear foster-mother with her."

With this noble purpose in view, she had assumed a plain dress, like that of an ordinary Parisian woman, as we have seen, and driven

to Bellville, the headquarters, as our readers, doubtless, are aware, of the disaffected.

She was superlatively happy. Life, at last, was brilliant with sunshine. You're, wealth and love all were hers. What more could she desire?

"What good could not she and Henri do," she said to herself, "among their tenants in Brittany?"

Her lot was so blessed, she wished blessedness for everyone. The dull quarter to which she had come, with its tall, forbidding-looking houses, appeared like a very paradise. She tripped on with a step as light as at seventeen, and a heart that sang songs of silent thankfulness as she went.

She did not even notice, in her happiness, how deserted the streets were, or that the few persons she met avoided her, skulking out of sight as if things of evil omen. She only awoke from her half-ecstasy when she turned into the miserable side street.

"This is it," she said, looking around. "Rue Tournelles, No. 9. Ah! here it is."

She advanced to the door, but was surprised to find no portress.

"It is on the fourth floor," she said, glancing up the steep staircase. "Strange that no one is about whom I can question. I shall have to go up myself to inquire."

She drew her skirts daintily about her, with a grace that would have betrayed her high breeding, in spite of her plain dress, if anyone familiar with courts had been there. Then she began quickly to ascend the stairs. She reached the fourth story breathless.

But she knocked in vain at the door of the room she sought. Looking around to see if anyone could be found, she discerned an old woman on the landing above glaring down.

"They've been gone these three days," said the woman, "and nobody knows where. What are you, or those like you, doing here?"

Before Irene could reply to this strange address there came a sound of hurried feet on the stairs below, and a body of gend'armes, headed by an officer, filled each landing. In a moment more she heard the men knocking on the doors, and immediately after, as the knocking appeared to be disregarded, the crash of the doors followed.

Then came shrieks and curses, as men and women were dragged forth. In the midst of this uproar, and while Irene was still contemplating the commotion, and wondering, in a sort of dazed way, what it could all mean, her own landing was invaded, and a heavy hand was laid on her shoulder.

"In the name of the law," said the sergeant.

The marquise drew herself haughtily away from the touch, all the blood of her proud ancestors surging up to her cheeks.

"What do you mean?" she cried. "Have a care whom you insult."

The officer laughed scornfully.

"Come—come, no airs," he said. "I mean to arrest you."

"Arrest me?"

"Certainly. No fuss now; but come quietly along."

He put out his hand towards her again. She drew back more haughtily, if possible, than before.

"Don't dare to touch me," she commanded. "Do you know who I am?"

The man's only answer was another laugh, that was accompanied by a look indescribably insolent.

"I am the Marquise de Villeroy," said Irene.

"See here," replied the officer, "that dodge won't do. Every Petroleuse nearly that we arrest now calls herself a countess, or a duchess, to make us believe she's innocent. The trick is played out."

"A Petroleuse! Do you take me for one of those horrible incendiaries?"

"You play your part well," retorted the officer; "you have probably been an actress; but I tell you again it won't do. We know that this house has been a regular den of Communists, men and women both, and the women

worse than the men. We've trapped you all at last."

"Good heavens," cried Irene, clasping her hands, and for the first time realising her peril, "I a Communist!"

But immediately she rallied. She came of a race that never flinched in the face of danger.

"I demand to be taken before your superior officer, before some court; I demand to have witnesses sent for in order to be identified; I appeal—"

"Come, come," cried the officer, losing all temper, and rudely seizing her by the shoulder, "we've had enough of this. If we took every Petroleuse before a court the judges wouldn't get through till the Day of Judgment. No, we make shorter and sharper work of them. Here, Jean, Roberte, take hold of her, one on each side, and bring her along, and make them all fall in. We'll march the gang at once to prison and start them for the convict ships to-morrow, that is, unless some of them are shot first."

* * * * *

The old coachman waited for his mistress hour after hour, but in vain. Noon struck; the afternoon waned away; the twilight came. Next the street lamps were lit, stretching in a long line of light down the broad avenue. Still the marquise did not come. It was impossible for him, meantime to leave his horse. Continually he accosted the passers-by with questions, but no one had seen the lady he described, or heard of her.

Towards the middle of the afternoon, he was told that a raid had been made in some streets near, and a large number of Communists arrested; but he did not connect this in any way with the disappearance of his mistress. The conclusion he finally came to was that she must have been waylaid and murdered.

At last, long after dark, he abandoned his post and returned to the Rue St. Honore to consult his fellow-servants. But they were simple rustics like himself, and who had come up to Paris from the chateau, and knew nothing of the ways of the great city. Neither the butler nor the cook could give him any advice. All were equally bewildered.

"I ought to have refused to let her out of my sight," said the old coachman, with tears. "It is all my fault. I have known her since she was a baby on her mother's knee. Would that the vicomte was here!"

The mention of the vicomte suggested to the butler a gleam of hope.

"Let us send for him," he said.

"Yes," answered the cook, "write."

"How little you know," replied the butler, pompously; "the telegraph is the thing; that is twice as quick."

So the vicomte was telegraphed for.

"But it will be two days before he can get here," said the butler. "Alas, alas!"

Meantime Irene, lost in a mob of prisoners, was being marched to the temporary gaol provided for convicts. As the procession passed along the streets, it was joined by other captives, for the raid had been a thorough one, and before long the numbers arrested reached a hundred and more.

All ages and both sexes were huddled together in this motley crowd. There was the old bag who had looked down on Irene from the fifth story, and there were young girls hardly out of childhood, but still old in vice. There were grey-headed men, with faces besotted with drink, and youths just verging on manhood, but with the low, beetling brows of generations of inherited passion and crime.

Among the misguided Communists there were perhaps some who were actuated by noble ideas, however visionary; but there were none of these in that sad procession, for there only the thief was seen, or the drunkard, or the assassin, in short human nature in its lowest and most bestial state. The very contact with such characters, brought up as she had been, made Irene shudder with horror.

Arrived at the gloomy edifice which had been set apart for a temporary gaol, the prisoners were divided, the men being told off into one

vast hall, the women into another. Before being thrust into this crowded and stifling apartment, Irene made another appeal for liberty. This time it was the gaoler she addressed.

But that functionary, on hearing what she had to say, only shook his head. He did not look like a hard-hearted man, or an unjust one, and that was why Irene had addressed him rather than the new officer in command.

But the atrocities of the Communists had been so great, the horror of them was so universal, that for the time even the best men lost their balance, and were cruel and vindictive.

"But I am the Marquise de Villeroy," she urged. "You have only to send to my hotel in the Rue St. Honore and the servants will testify to it. Do not, I beseech you, thrust me in here with these wretches."

"Ma foi! She looks like a marquise, don't she?" cried a virago, who had overheard her, with arms a-kimbo. "It is the dress of an aristocrat," contemptuously, "is it not? I hate all aristocrats; but they do one thing well, at least; they dress richly; they don't go about masquerading in a shop-girl's clothes."

"There, go away, and leave her alone," said the gaoler, pushing the virago aside.

"You will send then?" began Irene. "You will ask—"

"No, I won't, and I haven't the time; it would be as much as my place was worth. But that's no reason why this she-devil should insult you."

"My friends will pay you handsomely. They will make you comfortable for life," breathlessly cried Irene, taking him by the sleeve. "In the name of the Holy Virgin, I implore—"

"Tut, tut," retorted the man, shaking her off, "don't talk nonsense. You look as if you could make me comfortable for life, don't you? The tag was right. Marquises don't dress like you. There! You force me to be rude."

He thrust her from him, shut the door, and double-locked it. Reeling backwards, Irene staggered against the virago, who stepped aside, and with a mocking courtesy, said:

"Madame le Marquise is tipay, she cannot keep her feet. Come here all, and look at madame."

They crowded around Irene, old and young, all in the guise of women, not one a woman at heart any longer. Her assertion of rank, repeated from one to another, was hailed with shouts of derision.

No one believed her; but they hated her none the less; they hated her the more, because she thus seemed to disown them. They hustled her here and there, they turned her around and around, "to see," as they said, "what an aristocrat looked like; they curtsied before her, holding wide out their skirts, and stooping to the very ground, with satiric speech and laughter.

"Will Madame le Marquise be served?" they cried.

"Call Madame le Marquise's carriage."

"Ha! his majesty, the emperor," and at the name a howl of rage went up, "is waiting to give audience to Madame le Marquise."

Irene made no reply, in words, to these assaults. She held her hands up in front of her face to protect herself, and retreated to a corner. Think of her situation! Tenderly, luxuriously, nurtured, and now beset by this vile crew. She heard coarse words whose meaning she did not understand even. The faces all around her were such only as are seen in nightmare dreams. She could think of nothing living so horrible, unless to be in a madhouse, and at the mercy of its frantic inmates.

The virago, who had first led the assault, had, meantime, seized Irene by the shoulder, to drag her from her corner. In doing this, the sleeve gave way, and through the rent, the delicate cambric of her under-garment was seen.

"Ah, ha!" cried the virago, "the truth is out, at last. She is some lady's-maid, who has stolen the under-clothing of her mistress."

"Or worse," howled another, thrusting her finger at her, with a leer. "Some cast-off—"

All the pride of Irene's long-descended ancestry blazed up. She turned on this speaker a look of withering scorn. She could not have helped it, even if she had known that the next instant she would die for it.

"You needn't look at me like that," shouted the woman, darting at Irene's face, with nails that were as large and sharp as the talons of a vulture. "I am an honest woman, I would have you know, and not some fine aristocrat's leman, like others. A pretty thing for you to look down on us! You are a traitor, and ought to die. Let us ourselves do justice on her," she cried, turning to the others. "Liberté, égalité, fraternité. Houp-la!"

"No, no," said the elder virago, interposing, with a sardonic laugh; "they'll save us the trouble, if we wait till to-morrow. We'll tell them what a *Petroleuse* she has been. Do you know, Madame le Marquise," with another mocking courtesy to her, "what they do with such as you?"

Irene for answer, only shrank closer into her corner, and drew her torn dress together over her shoulder. If there had been a single heart there that had not long before been hardened into callousness, it would have been melted into pity.

"They do this," said the virago, pushing close up to Irene, who pressed herself flat against the wall, to avoid the hug. "They'll put you up against a wall, just as you have put yourself now, only with your face to it, for you'll nothave the courage to look at them, and then the soldiers stand off a piece, and present their guns so," imitating the levelling of muskets, "and ping—ping—all is over!"

Irene clasped her hands before her eyes, shudderingly, while the virago and her crew howled with delight.

"Yes, my dainty little marquise," added her tormentor, with a last courtesy, "that's the way they'll fix you to-morrow." And a roar of triumphant laughter echoed her words.

But the mob of raging women, infuriated not less by their own peril, than by the serene and lofty pride of their victim, grew at last, tired, and left Irene to herself. She crouched down in her corner, chilled with cold, hungry with long fasting, feeling degraded, in spite of herself, by these vile associates, and began again to think of her situation.

Yes! it was not improbable that she would be shot to-morrow, and without trial. She had heard of numerous such instances. Always, when caught red-handed, the Communists were thus shot. Often, even when not so caught they were, on the accusation of accomplices or pretended witnesses, summarily executed in the same way. And here were these women, one and all, ready to swear against her! What hope of escape was there?

"Oh! if only Henri knew—if only I could get word to him," she moaned, rocking herself to and fro; and she pressed her hands against her eyes, to keep back her tears, lest her tormentors should see her weakness.

Morning at last came. A scanty breakfast was served out to the prisoners. Irene could not eat, although faint with hunger. The coarse fare absolutely repelled her. The women were then told to file out through the door.

"An order has come for your deportation," said the turnkey, "and you are to march at once. Come, hurry up! What are you waiting for, you—you—"

"Oh, it's the marquise—Madame le Marquise," said the old virago, tauntingly, turning around. "I told her she was to be shot, for never was there such a *Petroleuse*, and she's waiting, you know, for the executioners."

"Get on with you, you old hag," said the gaoler, thrusting the virago away. "Can't you let the woman alone? What, is she tipsy? Has she had absinthe hidden on her person?"

For Irene was tottering as if she would fall. She had when the gaoler first addressed her started forward with clasped hands to make a last appeal to his humanity; but the virago had interrupted her, and now the words, not less than the inexorable manner of the custodian,

convinced her that her prayer would be in vain. No wonder she staggered and was faint.

"Here, two of you women take her by the arm one on each side, and stay, put her in the middle of the gang—so; and now forward, march!"

The terrible procession filed out. What with the ingrained brutality of all but Irene, and what with the night of suspense, which in spite of their attempts at jest had been one of terror, the women looked one and all like lost spirits wild with rage and despair. They acted, too, as such.

They knew now their doom, and that there was no hope, and to many of them exile was even worse than death. Some tried to hide their emotions by singing songs of the Commune, wild, frantic melodies, with wild words; some laughed half idiotically; some blasphemed, yes, even though women; some danced, as if going to a festival. It was horrible.

And Irene, half fainting, and dragged rather than led along, looked with her soiled and torn dress, her scarred face, and her aspect of utter hopelessness, hardly less degraded and abhorrent than the rest.

The procession filled the middle of the street, files of soldiers walking on each side, and a strong guard preceding and following. It was so early that few people were abroad, and those who were turned shuddering away.

The fresh air, notwithstanding all she had suffered and was still suffering, gradually revived Irene. At first her eyes had been cast on the ground in despair. Now she lifted them wearily and looked around.

A church was directly in front, with a wide flight of steps leading up to its doorway, and just as the procession reached it, and was about to turn down a side street, Irene became conscious of two gentlemen, who had taken refuge on the steps to avoid the throng.

One was a short, stout man, with spectacles; he was well advanced in years, and was talking earnestly. The other was tall and soldierly, still in the prime of early manhood, and was listening intently. This one—could it be? Yes! Oh, blessed sight, it was Henri!

Irene had thought him hundreds of miles away down in Brittany. But here he was, only a few feet distant! God had answered her prayer. In a moment more she would be free. She had only to call, he had only to recognise her.

"Henri! Henri!" she cried.

As she spoke, she tried to break from the women who held her by either arm. But amid the songs and wild laughter, and mad shouts of the half-insane procession, her appeal was unheard. The vicomte continued to listen to his companion, and did not even lift his eyes.

"Henri! Henri!"

Her heart was in her throat, almost choking her; for now they were opposite the church steps, and still he had not heard her.

"Henri!"

Her voice rose to a scream. Still the vicomte stood, without raising his voice. He heard, in a dreamy sort of way, the tramp of the prisoners, and what seemed to him their demoniacal laughter; and with every instinct revolting at the scene, he studiously refrained from looking up.

"Henri! Henri!"

The cry, hoarse with despair, cut sharp and high through the noises of the crowd. It had already attracted the attention of the nearest officer, and now, at this repetition of it, he rushed up with drawn sword.

"Is that woman mad?" he cried. "We'll make short work of her," with an oath. "Mon Dieu, how she howls!"

"Henri! Henri! Carnac!"

Irene had torn herself loose, her bonnet having fallen off, her tresses were streaming wildly; her arms were extended frantically towards the church. To a stranger who did not know her tragedy, she looked like some mad Moenad.

Tramp, tramp went the procession. That part in which Irene was had already passed the church, and had turned down the side street. She was looking back with outstretched arms,

still frantically calling her lover's name, when the officer, pushing his way through the throng of prisoners, reached her, and put his hand roughly on her mouth to gag her.

"Carnac! Carnac!" she cried, with one last despairing shriek, that rose to the very heavens.

Then the brutal hand of the officer was on her throat, and she knew that all hope was gone. Her lover had not once looked up. She threw up her hands, gave a choked cry, and sank senseless on the ground.

CHAPTER II.

The great statesman who had been conversing with the vicomte was endeavouring to convince the latter that a Republic was the only thing at present possible for France.

"You are a legitimist by the traditions of your family," he said, "though not an impracticable one, and, therefore, I appeal to you. You can exercise great influence among the deputies, especially those from Brittany. It is for this I have beat up your quarters, as you would say in the army, early in the day, and have asked you to walk with me to the station on our way to Versailles. But I shall have to stop, I'm afraid, till these prisoners have passed. Aren't their wild outcries terrible? One hardly knows whether most to pity or abhor the wretches."

"Abhor their principles and conduct, but pity them individually," said the vicomte. "Poor, deluded—"

He stopped suddenly, and grasped his companion's arm. The end of the procession was at that moment wheeling around the corner. The steady tramp of the soldiery that brought up its rear was already beginning to predominate over the songs, and laughter, and shrieks.

"Surely," cried the vicomte, "some one called 'Henri?' And from the midst of that horrible mob."

"I heard some madwoman shriek," answered his companion. "But I couldn't make out what she said."

"No, the thing is impossible," continued the vicomte. "Yet—there again—and this time it is Carnac. Great heaven—"

As he spoke he broke away.

"You will get into trouble," said his companion, following. "Fortunately they know me."

Breathlessly the vicomte dashed down the steps. Breathlessly he forced his way through the crowd, which had come to a sudden halt.

"Someone has fainted," said one.

"Some woman gone mad with despair," said a soldier, with a shrug.

In a moment the vicomte had gained the centre of the crowd, the soldiers making way, less for him than for the little man behind him, whom all seemed to know.

A moment more, and Irene's prostrate form was before him. He knew the slender, graceful figure; the delicate complexion; the high-bred features—notwithstanding the torn dress, the scarred face, the dishevelled hair.

"Great heavens," he cried, almost frantic, "what does this mean? Stand back! It is the Marquise de Villeroy—my betrothed."

As he spoke he stooped, and taking Irene's lifeless form in his arms, looked up defiantly at the officer. The vicomte's emotion, his air of authority, his confirmation of Irene's statement, carried conviction to the crowd, which fell back. Even those vile wretches were awed. Only the officer remained untouched. He began, pompously:

"I would have you know—"

But he never finished the sentence. The vicomte's companion had now reached Irene's side, and the moment the officer saw this new intruder, he fell back abashed, taking off his cap.

"Mon Dieu!" cried the great statesman, stooping over Irene, his voice shaking with horror, "it is the Marquise de Villeroy. How did she come here? What does it mean?"

He turned sternly to the officer. The latter cowered before him.

"I—I was only obeying orders," he stam-

mered, "and we thought her—we were told—"

"Never mind what you thought, or were told," interrupted the intruder, sternly. "I will see to all that. Make way there, Vicomte, follow me!"

The vicomte bore his precious burden around the corner, and paused at the foot of the church steps. A cab was passing, and he hailed it.

"Her hotel is but a short distance off," he said, hurriedly, "and it would be better to take her there at once, where she can have her own maid. I think she is coming to even now."

"Then I will go," answered the great statesman; "but I will send this evening to know where she is. Poor child!"

He bowed and left, and as he went down the broad avenue he heard, from the side of the street, the tramp of the procession, which had again begun to move, and over all, the songs, and laughter, and curses, and horrible din. The cab had hardly started, when Irene faintly opened her eyes. But she was still bewildered. She only recognised Henri in a confused way.

"It is over then?" she whispered, clinging to him. "I am in heaven—and with you—oh! Henri—"

Then she fainted away again, this time with joy. She did not revive until they reached her hotel, and her cousin had carried her in and laid her on a lounge, in her own salon. Here she heaved a deep sigh, and opened her eyes and recognised them all, one by one—Henri kneeling beside her as he chafed her hands, her maid weeping over her as she bathed Irene's forehead, and the old butler, standing a little way off, his grey head shaking with emotion, as in pain.

"What is it? Why do you all look so at me?" said Irene. "Ah, I remember. I have had a bad dream."

She shivered like one struck by a sudden chill, and glanced around, as if dreading to see horrible spectres.

"It is all over. It will never come again," said Henri, soothingly. "You are safe now. When you are rested, you can tell us all about it."

"Oh!" replied Irene, with another shiver, "the vile women, the loathsome wonds. Are you sure it will never come back?"

They quieted her at last. A physician had been sent for, and now arrived, and when he had given her a sleeping potion she sank into slumber, her hand close clasping that of Henri.

They had proposed to carry her to her chamber; but she clung to that hand as if without it there was no safety, and the medical man had said:

"Best so—best so; let her sleep here, and holding to it, it will do her more good than all my pharmacy."

It was a long time before Irene recovered entirely from the shock of that awful day and night. But when she had become strong enough to bear the journey down to Brittany, and when she began to mix among the dependents she had known from childhood; when she walked in the woods where she had sought for wild flowers as a girl, then the bloom came back again to her cheeks and the elasticity to her step.

The vicomte's election had been arranged sooner than he had expected, and he had hurried to Paris at once, arriving at dawn. He had first, however, to go to Versailles before he could seek Irene. But for the accident of meeting her, they might never have seen each other again. Of course they had received no telegram.

The marriage took place as originally arranged, and though the duties of the vicomte called him often to Versailles, and Irene always accompanied him, yet the chief part of her life has been spent in Brittany, where her wealth enables her to ameliorate the condition of scores of her father's people, and also to restore, in great measure, her ancestral home.

She has two sons and a daughter. The elder boy will inherit his father's title and half the property, and the younger the chateau and dependencies of his mother. The daughter, though still only an infant, is in the fond opinion of her doting parents, reserved for some exceptionally high and happy destiny in marriage, and we are quite sure she will deserve it if she grows up to resemble Irene.

This is no fancy sketch. We literally "tell the tale as 'twas told to us," except that we have substituted fictitious names for real ones. Alas! it is only one of a hundred others that ended far more tragically at that awful time. The world will never know half the horrors of THE FRENCH COMMUNE.

M. V. S.

A FLOWER WHEN BLOOMING.

A FLOWER when blooming sweet and fair
Receives a love from all;
But when it fades, so does our love,
And ceases as it falls.
So tell to me if such will be,
When drawn I've my last breath;
Will all have ceased to love me too,
When I'm asleep in death?

Such thoughts my heart with pain draws
up,

More bitter do they grow;
I know I'm loved, yet faint I'd feel
The want of love's sweet glow.
Before that I depart from hence,
Then would I feel the more;
The love that's given high up in Heaven
By the God we all adore.

Still—to be gone and then forgot—

Can such a thing e'er be?
There always must be one who pines,
And casts a thought to thee.
Some parent, brother, or maybe
Some friend we once loved dear,
Would surely sometimes give a thought
To one that once was here.

And yet some poor, poor wayside waif

May not have one on earth,
To cast a thought now while he lives,
Far less while he's in death.
Yet still there's peace, for scriptures say
Of Him who is above—
That He is good, is kind and great,
A God that's full of love.

Forgotten here, but far away

In that home void of sin,
There dwells a God that loves e'en waifs
And takes all wanderers in.
And though I now may want the love
Of someone here on earth;
Yet I am sure of His great love
When I'm asleep in death. S. B. N.

STATISTICS.

POPULATION STATISTICS OF THE GLOBE.—The population of the globe may be roughly assumed at 1,421,000,000, divided thus: Europe, 309,000,000; Asia, 824,000,000; Africa, 199,000,000; Oceania, 4,000,000; America, 85,000,000. It has been calculated from the mortality tables of known countries that the annual number of deaths throughout the world is 35,698,350, or that, in other words, 97,790 persons die each day. On the other hand, the balance of population is more than kept up by births at the rate of 104,800 per day. Seventy new lives are ushered in every minute of the 24 hours.

THROATLETS of pearl are now very fashionable. At first they were finished with tassels at the ends; now they are clasped round the throat. The Princess of Wales wears hers with a magnificent diamond clasp.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ROAST LEG OF PORK.—Make a sage and onion stuffing; choose a small, tender leg of pork, and score the skin in squares with a sharp knife. Cut an opening in the knuckle, loosen the skin, and fill with the sage and onion stuffing. Spread the whole leg with a thin coating of sweet butter, and put it before a clear fire, not too near. Baste well while cooking, and when nearly done, draw a little nearer the fire to brown. Thicken the dripping with a little flour, add boiling water, season with salt and pepper, boil up at once, and serve in a gravy tureen.

TO CURE BACON.—Make a mixture in the following proportion: Salt, four pounds; coarse brown sugar, one pound; saltpetre, half a pound. Rub the inside of each fitch with this mixture, and place them upon a tray, having a trench round it to drain off the brine. Change the fitches in reverse order every four days, rubbing in the mixture each time. In about three weeks the process will be completed. Smoking is preferable, but you do not desire it.

TO PRESERVE GRAPES THROUGH THE WINTER.—Gather them on the afternoon of a dry day before they are quite ripe. Have ready a clean dry box and some wheat bran. Place in the barrel a layer of bran, and then a layer of grapes alternately, till the barrel is filled, taking care that the grapes do not touch each other. Allow the top to be filled in with bran to about six inches deep. Close the box so that the air cannot penetrate, and the grapes will keep for nine or twelve months.

TO ANALYSE WELL WATER.—Put a small pinch of permanganate of potash into a wine-glass of the water. Do not stir it, but just observe the colour; if of a dull claret or marone, be sure it is impregnated—the worse the colour the greater the danger. Make a point of testing the well on the first of every month.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A PROPOSAL is out by a company for supplying London with salt water from Lancing, near Brighton.

A PARISIAN actress recently remarked to her friend, "I don't see any use wearing monogram stockings this kind of weather."

A PILGRIMAGE on a large scale is being organised by some of the leading English Catholics, with the object of going to Rome to assist at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

We understand that H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh has purchased Norris Castle, in the Isle of Wight, as a place of residence, for £80,000. The mansion was formerly the residence of the Duke's grandmother, H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent.

A PAESIAN was on trial recently for stealing some candles, and the counsel was examining witnesses who had bought from him. One of them said that though he had suspected the candles had been stolen he had bought a franc's-worth, but that in order not to encourage robbery he had paid for them with a bad franc.

A SOLUTION of the Game Difficulty is announced. The Marquis of Aylesbury, whose possessions extend from Jervaux Abbey for a considerable distance around, in the valley of the Ure, has made an arrangement with his tenantry by which, on the payment of one shilling an acre on their holdings, they have full power over the game, and can kill whatever they like on their own farms.

The following is an interesting item relating to the "Times," and will afford an idea of the scale on which business is carried on in Printing House-square. The over-matter—that is, the news and other newspaper material set up but distributed without being used, from pressure on space—represents an annual expenditure of from fourteen to sixteen thousand pounds.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

In our next issue (No. 868) will be commenced a new story, entitled, "BOB BOY MACGREGOR; OR, THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN," by the Author of "Ethel Arbuthnot; or, Who's Her Husband?"

MR. GEORGE PATTON, of 136, Commercial Road, Peckham, S.E., would be very happy to correspond with Miss Bewfort on perplexing subjects.

RESPONDENT.—Write a letter to the young lady's parents, asking permission to address her with a view to making her your wife if your affection is reciprocated by the lady herself.

SAMUEL L.—Yes, it would be wrong to tempt the young lady to disobey her father. If, as your letter would suggest, you are still young, we advise you to wait a little while for explanations. In the meantime carry yourself so wisely that the cruel father must change his mind, and conclude that you would make an excellent husband for his daughter.

S. D. P.—Rare coins have no fixed value. We very frequently see statements that coins of such and such a date are worth so much, but you would have great difficulty in finding purchasers at the prices named. A friend of ours who had some rare dates recently tried to dispose of them at a reasonable discount from catalogue prices, but found that dealers would pay a premium of only a few pence, while they charged enormous prices for the same dates.

SUSANNA.—You were very imprudent in making the acquaintance of strange young men in the manner described, and have done your friend an injustice in using her as a cloak to cover your own flirting propensities. The young men doubtless discovered by your actions that such was the case, and unwilling to aid in the deceit you practised upon her, took a summary method of terminating the acquaintance. It should be a lesson to you not to flirt with strangers in the future.

J. B. & T. T.—We do not go in for matters pugilistic, and cannot therefore oblige you with the particulars of a fight between Aaron Jones and Tom Sayers, how long it lasted, or who most damaged his opponent's face. Write to the Editor of "Bell's Life," Strand, London.

J. S. A. W. B.—If your husband died leaving no directions with regard to the house, and you complete the payments and obtain possession, it would be yours absolutely to do with as you like; but if you have any children they are entitled to their share.

CAMDEN.—The year 1900 will not be a leap year, for the reason stated in the following brief explanation of the Gregorian calendar: In order to make the calendar year correspond with the solar year, Julius Caesar, 45 B.C., fixed the solar year at 365 days and 6 hours, every fourth year being bissextile or leap year. This prevailed until the time of Pope Gregory, in 1582, but was found to be defective in this particular—that the solar year really consisted of 365 days, 5 hours, and 49 minutes, which had caused a difference during the Julian period of about 10 days, the vernal equinox falling on the 11th instead of the 21st of March. To correct this error, Gregory ordained that the year 1582 should consist of but 365 days—October 5 becoming October 15—and to prevent further irregularity, that no year closing in a century should be bissextile except such as would divide by 400 without leaving a remainder. Three days are thus retrenched in every 400 years, because the lapse of 11 minutes in each year makes very nearly 3 days in that period, leaving an error of 1 day only in every 5,200 years. The new style of reckoning was not adopted in Great Britain and the colonies until 1752, when it became necessary to drop 11 days, which was effected by calling the 3rd of September the 14th. The party who printed the calendar of the year 1800, giving 29 days to February, made an error, as that year was not a leap year. There are many intelligent people nowadays who would fall into the same error, thinking that every year which can be divided by four without a remainder is a leap year, not being aware of the exception noted above.

OUR CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER.

WITH No. 868, PUBLISHED NEXT FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12th,

WILL BE ISSUED

OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER,

Containing Well Written Tales by Authors of Repute.

FORTY PAGES. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MILLY and JENNY, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen. Milly is twenty, dark hair and eyes, medium height, good-looking. Jenny is twenty, light brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children, loving. Respondents must be between twenty-two and twenty-five, tall, dark.

SUNBEAM and MAUDIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men about twenty-one. Sunbeam is eighteen, tall, dark. Maudie is eighteen, fair, fond of home and children.

NEW DRILL and GREAT GUN, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. New Drill is twenty-one, dark, brown eyes, good-looking. Great Gun is twenty-two, fair, auburn hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and children.

HETTA and EMILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen about twenty-one with a view to matrimony. Hetta is twenty, auburn hair, medium height, fond of home and children. Emily is eighteen, fair, loving.

WELL DONE and LISTEN TO ME, two friends, would like to correspond with two petty officers in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony. Well Done is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, loving, fond of home and children. Listen to Me is nineteen, tall, black hair, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondents must be between twenty-one and twenty-five.

MEMORY OF THE PAST.

I THINK of thee at evening's calm,
And in night's soul-voiced hour,
When all around is softly hushed
As by a spell of power;
When gleams of childhood's joyous days
Come thronging round my heart,
And dreams of love and hope are there
That will not all depart.

Oh, oft in memory thrills again
That witching smile and tone,
Sweet as the wind-harps—echoed, aye,
To mine in union.
I deemed thee not so very dear
Till then wert far from me;
But now thou'rt ever in my thoughts,
My thoughts are all of thee.

I think of thee at morn, and midst
The world's bewildering throng,
Where pleasure waits her every wile,
And hope her siren song.
And deeming thou art still the same
As once thou wert to me.
My heart from earth's cold mockery
Exulting turns to thee.

Oh, every word or kindly look
Thou'rt ever to me has given
Is on my heart's unvarying page,
As 'twere with diamonds graven.
But thou art changed, the flowers of hope
On life's bleak waste are cast,
And earth has but one joy for me—
The memory of the past. H. P. R.

SLIDE JACKET JOE, SLICER, BUNKER, ECCENTRIC, and HAPPY JACK, five seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with five young ladies with a view to matrimony. Slide Jacket Joe is twenty-six, dark, good-looking, medium height, fond of children. Slicer is twenty-four, tall, fair, fond of dancing. Bunker is twenty-two, fair, good-looking, fond of dancing and music. Eccentric is twenty-three, tall, dark, of a loving disposition. Happy Jack is twenty-one, tall, curly hair, fair, fond of children. Respondent must be between nineteen and twenty-four.

MARION, tall, fair, brown hair, hazel eyes, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a respectable tradesman.

SAUCY PATTY, nineteen, a domestic servant, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one. She is loving, fond of home and children.

W. P. and G. C. Y., two friends, wish to correspond with two young ladies. W. P. is twenty, loving, dark hair and eyes. G. C. Y. is nineteen, dark, of a loving disposition, dark hair, blue eyes.

ROSE, THISTLE, and SHAMROCK, three seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Rose is twenty-five, dark, medium height, fond of children. Shamrock is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition. Thistle is twenty-one, black hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing.

JANE, DINAH, and FANNY, three friends, would like to correspond with three seamen in the Royal Navy. Jane is thirty-eight, a widow. Dinah is twenty, fond of home and music. Fanny is eighteen, fond of dancing and music. Respondents must be from twenty-four to forty-four, good-tempered.

JOLLY TED, twenty, a private in the R.M., good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

I. O. G. T. is responded to by—M. S., medium height, brown hair and eyes, loving; by—Sophia N.; by—Sister Annie, good-tempered, medium height, brown hair and eyes, loving; and by—M. M., thirty, brown hair, blue eyes, domesticated.

RUE OUT by—E. J. F., twenty, tall, fair, and good-looking.

ETHEL V. by—Harry W., twenty, fair, good-looking.

MILLY by—Cecil M., twenty, fair, medium height, and good-looking.

ALICIA by—Martin C., twenty-two, tall, dark, rather handsome.

HILDA by—Benben, dark, hazel eyes, and of a loving disposition.

CECIL by—Fred, brown eyes, tall, dark.

ALICE by—Charlie B.

WILLIAM by—Nelly, twenty-one, medium height, very dark.

JAMES by—Constance, twenty-two, tall, fair, good-looking.

BLOSSOM by—Flying Hauliards, twenty-one, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

ANNIE by—Flying Guy, twenty-two, medium height, fair, good-looking.

L. B. by—Miss O.; and by—Mahoney, forty-four, a widow.

VIOLET by—P. E. A., twenty-two, tall, dark, fond of home and music.

ANNIE by—Dusty.

GRACE by—Smiler.

MARY by—Jack, twenty-one, dark, loving.

EMILY by—Bill, twenty, fair, fond of music.

POLLIE by—Jem, twenty, good-looking, tall, fair.

PRIMROSE by—R. M., twenty-three, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.

CYPRESS JACK by—Zenobia, seventeen, brown hair, blue eyes.

HANDY HANDY by—E. H. D., twenty-one, grey eyes, fair.

FORGETFUL JOE by—L. M. H., twenty, dark.

LOVELY NELL by—E. T., twenty-one, dark hair, grey eyes, medium height.

SHAMIS by—Wild Flower, twenty-five, fond of home and children.

MARY by—James M., thirty, brown hair, grey eyes.

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